



TEXAS

Health and Human Services

Cecile E. Young, Executive Commissioner

Request for Applications (RFA)

Grant for

*Thriving Texas Families Program
Pilot Projects*

RFA No. HHS0013943

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

December 8, 2023, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time

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Article I. Executive Summary, Definitions, and Statutory Authority

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is accepting Applications for the Thriving Texas Families (TTF) program pilot projects.

The purpose of this RFA is to fund innovative thriving families pilot projects that utilize research-based strategies demonstrating outcomes identified in Texas Health and Safety Code Section 54.006 and meeting the requirements as outlined in this RFA.

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

Grant Name:	Thriving Texas Families Program Pilot Projects
RFA No.:	HHS0013943
Application Submission Deadline:	December 08, 2023, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarifications:	November 13 2023, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Estimated Total Available Funding:	\$7,500,000.00
Estimated Total Number of Awards:	Multiple Awards
Estimated Individual Max Award Amount:	\$2,000,000.00
Anticipated Project Start Date:	April 01, 2024
Length of Project Period:	18 months
Eligible Applicants:	Applicants must: A. Be a public or private nonprofit organization with a current 501(c)(3) status.

	<p>B. Have a minimum of one year of operational experience providing direct client services for pregnant women and families.</p> <p>C. Not have a current Grant Agreement with HHSC under the HHSC Thriving Texas Families Program (formerly known as Alternatives to Abortion program).</p>
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To be considered for screening, evaluation and award, Applicants must provide and submit all required information and documentation as set forth in **Article VIII, Application Organization and Submission Requirements** and **Article XIII, Submission Checklist** by the Application Submission Deadline established in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda. See **Section 9.2, Initial Compliance Screening of Applications**, for further details.

1.2 DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Unless a different definition is specified, or the context clearly indicates otherwise, the definitions and acronyms given to a term below apply whenever the term appears in this RFA. All other terms have their ordinary and common meaning.

Refer to all exhibits to this RFA for additional definitions.

[“Addendum”](#) means a written clarification or revision to this RFA, including exhibits and forms, as issued and posted by HHSC to the HHS Grants RFA website.

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

[“Application”](#) means all documents the Applicant submits in response to this RFA, including all required forms and exhibits. May also be referred to in this RFA as [“Solicitation Response.”](#)

[“Budget”](#) means the financial plan for carrying out the Grant Project, as formalized in the Grant Agreement, including awarded funds, submitted as part of the Application in response to this RFA. An Applicant’s requested Budget may differ from the HHSC-approved Budget executed in the final Grant Agreement.

[“Business Days”](#) refers to Monday through Friday excluding holidays as appropriately determined by federal or state recognition.

“Calendar Days” refers to the total number of days in a particular month.

“CFR” means the Code of Federal Regulations which is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the federal government.

“Client” means a member of the target population to be served under a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA.

“Direct Cost” means those costs that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective under the Grant Project responsive to this RFA or other internally or externally funded activity, or that can be directly assigned to such activities relatively easily with a high degree of accuracy. Costs incurred for the same purpose in like circumstances must be treated consistently as either direct or indirect costs. Direct Costs include, but are not limited to, salaries, travel, Equipment, and supplies directly benefiting the grant-supported Project or activity.

“Effectiveness” means the impact of a program under conditions that are likely to occur in real-world implementation.

“Equipment” pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.1, means tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. See §200.1 for capital assets, computing devices, general purpose equipment, information technology systems, special purpose equipment, and supplies.

“Grant Agreement” means the agreement entered into by the HHSC and the Grantee as a result of this RFA, including the Signature Document and all attachments and amendments. May also be referred to in this RFA or its exhibits as “Contract.”

“Grantee” means the Party receiving funds under any Grant Agreement awarded under this RFA. May also be referred to in this RFA or its exhibits as “Subrecipient” or “Contractor”

“HHS” includes the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC).

“HHSC” means the Health and Human Services Commission.

“Indirect Cost” means those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. Indirect Costs represent the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the Grant Project responsive to this RFA but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the conduct of activities it performs.

“Indirect Cost Rate” is a device for determining in a reasonable manner the proportion of Indirect Costs each program should bear. It is the ratio (expressed as a percentage) of the Grantee’s Indirect Costs to a Direct Cost base.

“Key Personnel” means a Grantee organization's Project Contact, Fiscal Contact, or Executive Director, or any other key stakeholders in the proposed Project.

“Project” or “Grant Project” means the specific work and activities that are supported by the funds provided under the Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA.

“Project Period” is the initial period of time set forth in the Grant Agreement during which Grantees may perform approved grant-funded activities to be eligible for reimbursement or payment. Unless otherwise specified, the Project Period begins on the Grant Agreement effective date and ends on the Grant Agreement termination or expiration date, and represents the base Project Period, not including extensions or renewals. When referring to the base Project Period plus anticipated renewal or extension periods, “Grant Term” is used.

“Proposed Project” means the project work and activities being proposed for funding under this RFA.

“Readiness” means a determination that the Applicant has the specified attributes to support a given service; the ability to meet program and contractual requirements; and the capacity to achieve the service levels proposed to be provided with the funds awarded under a Grant Agreement resulting from this procurement.

“Research-Based” means models or approaches that are able to consistently measure and quantify positive impacts on women, families, and children. These models or approaches should utilize well trained staff that execute a documented program design that includes the purpose, frequency and duration or services, and intended outcome(s).

“RFA” means this Request for Applications, including all parts, exhibits, forms, attachments and Addenda posted on the HHS Grants RFA website. May also be referred to herein as “Solicitation.”

“State” means the State of Texas and its instrumentalities, including the HHSC and any other State agency, its officers, employees, or authorized agents.

“TTF Program” means the Thriving Texas Families Program as established in the Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 54.

“TxGMS” means the Texas Grant Management Standards published by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

“Unduplicated Client” means a client receiving services under the Proposed Project.

1.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY

HHSC is requesting Applications under Chapter 2254 of the Texas Government Code. State funds for this Grant Project are authorized under the Texas General Appropriations Act, Article II , Rider 65. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated State funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

1.4 STANDARDS

Awards made as a result of this RFA are subject to all policies, terms, and conditions set forth in or included with this RFA as well as applicable statutes, requirements, and guidelines including, but not limited to applicable provisions of the Texas Grant Management Standards (TxGMS) and the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200).

Article II. Scope of Grant Project

2.1 PURPOSE

This funding opportunity invites grant Applications requesting funding for the TTF program. The purpose of this program is to provide innovative thriving Texas families services to clients to promote childbirth and support women and families.

2.2 PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 24, 88th Legislature Regular Session, 2023 amended Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 54 to create the TTF Program to facilitate the operation of a statewide support network that provides community outreach, consultation, and care coordination for women with an unexpected pregnancy.

The TTF program provides a network of services that promote childbirth and supports women and families through childbirth and early childhood. TTF program is designed to:

- A. Promote healthy pregnancy and childbirth;
- B. Promote childbirth as an alternative to abortion;
- C. Increase access to resources that promote family and child development;
- D. Encourage family formation;
- E. Help parents establish and implement successful parenting techniques;
- F. Increase the number of families who achieve economic self-sufficiency; and

G. Provide a local approach and personalized support to pregnant women to promote childbirth in all instances of pregnancy.

Texas Health and Safety Code Chapter 54 authorizes the HHSC TTF Program to provide services that demonstrate the following outcomes:

- A. Improving healthy pregnancy and childbirth outcomes;
- B. Improving child health and development;
- C. Assisting families in achieving economic self-sufficiency and stability;
- D. Increasing workforce participation; or
- E. Promoting marriage and family formation for participating parents.

TTF program pilot projects are considered specialized initiatives that utilize Research-Based strategies which demonstrate one or more of the program outcomes targeting a specific population. The goal of the innovative projects is to provide additional support to pregnant women and families and inform future initiatives for the TTF program.

2.3 ELIGIBLE POPULATION

The eligible population to be served under this RFA consists of individuals who are Texas residents and meet one of the following:

- A. A pregnant woman;
- B. The biological father of an unborn child;
- C. The biological parent of a child who is 36 months of age or younger;
- D. An adoptive parent of a child who is 36 months of age or younger;
- E. An approved adoptive parent of an unborn child;
- F. A former Client who has experienced the loss of a child;
- G. A parent or legal guardian of a pregnant minor who is a program Client;
- H. The parent, legal guardian, or adult caregiver of a child who is 36 months of age or younger; or
- I. A parent who experienced a miscarriage or loss of a child not more than 90 Calendar Days before the parent begins participation in the services offered through the program.

Projects may target a specific certain population within the target populations identified above. Specific populations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. Pregnant women under the age of 18, biological father of an unborn child who is under the age of 18 or parent or legal guardian of a pregnant minor who is a program Client;

- B. Pregnant women who is experiencing behavioral health needs, biological father of an unborn child who is experiencing behavioral health needs or parent or legal guardian of a pregnant minor who is a program client and is experiencing behavioral health needs;
- C. Single parents who are pregnant or the biological parent of children who are 36 months of age or younger.
- D. Unwed couples who are pregnant or are the biological parents of children who are 36 months of age or younger;
- E. Families with two or more children who are 36 months of age or younger; or
- F. Pregnant women, fathers of an unborn child, and families with children who are 36 months of age or younger who are experiencing housing, food and or other resource insecurity.

2.4 ELIGIBLE SERVICE AREAS

The service areas eligible for Project funding under this RFA will include all Texas counties and/or city.

2.5 ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

This grant program may fund activities and costs as allowed by the laws, regulations, rules, and guidance governing fund use identified in the relevant sections of this RFA. Only grant-funded activities authorized under this RFA are eligible for reimbursement and payment under any Grant Agreement awarded as a result of this RFA.

Proposed Projects must demonstrate impact of one or more of the following TTF pilot outcomes:

- A. Improve healthy pregnancy and childbirth outcomes;
- B. Improve child health and development;
- C. Assist families in achieving economic self-sufficiency and stability;
- D. Increase workforce participation; and
- E. Promote marriage and family formation for participating parents.

Projects may demonstrate impact of other outcomes, however, grant award determinations will be based on the project's ability to demonstrate impact of the outcomes identified in this RFA. Allowable Proposed Project services include but are not limited to:

- A. Counseling and mentoring on pregnancy, education, parenting skills, adoption services, life skills, and employment readiness topics;
- B. Care coordination for prenatal, perinatal, and postnatal services, including connecting Clients to health services;

- C. Educational materials and information about pregnancy, parenting, and adoption services;
- D. Referrals to governmental and social service programs, including childcare, transportation, housing, and state and federal benefit programs;
- E. Classes on life skills, personal finance, parenthood, stress management, job training, job readiness, job placement, and educational attainment;
- F. Provision of supplies for infant care and pregnancy, including car seats, cribs, maternity clothes, infant diapers, and formula; and
- G. Housing services.

2.6 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- A. All Grantees and Proposed Projects funded under this RFA must meet and include the following program requirements:
 - 1. Direct Client services. All services provided under the TTF program pilot project must be provided directly by the Grantee. Applications that utilize a subcontracted service model will not be considered for award.;
 - 2. Utilize Research-Based strategies;
 - 3. Use a local approach and personalized support for clients served under the project;
 - 4. Include a pre and post assessment evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the services provided. The assessment evaluation must be made available to Clients but completion of the assessment cannot be conditioned upon receiving services under the pilot project. Reporting on the results of the evaluation will be required for all projects;
 - 5. Include a standardized Client intake process and tool that assesses the needs of the Clients.;
 - 6. Develop a service plan for each Client based on their individual needs. Services must be driven by the Client's self-identified needs; and
 - 7. Target at least one of the populations identified in **Section 2.3, Eligible Populations.**
 - 8. Must align with the TTF pilot outcomes identified in **Section 2.5, Eligible Activities.**
- B. Prior to administering a Client intake, the Awarded Grantees must inform Clients of the following:
 - 1. The type of data that will be collected during the Client intake and the purposes for which the data will be used;
 - 2. The collected data will become part of the Client's service plan;
 - 3. Obtained the Client's informed consent to complete the intake process.

4. The organization's grievance process and provide a written copy of the process; and
 5. The contact information of HHSC Ombudsman's Office and provide a written copy of the information.
 6. A consent form must be completed by each client. Consent forms collected by Grantee must be kept on file and made available to HHSC upon request.
- C. Communication and outreach to connect clients to services are required activities under this RFA. All communication and outreach strategies must meet the following requirements:
1. Be for the purpose of informing the public of the services provided under the project and how to access services;
 2. Be outlined in **Form F, Narrative Application**, Section 2. Project Work Plan;
 3. Be approved by HHSC prior to implementing; and
 4. Be in English and Spanish, when appropriate.
- D. Communication and Outreach activities are required. Activities may include, but are not limited to the following:
1. Outreach to other county social service programs to enhance awareness and collaboration.
 2. Developing and maintaining a Project specific website. The website and its content must be approved in writing by HHSC within 30 Calendar Days of Grant Agreement execution. At no time shall the website contain any content not approved in writing by HHSC. The approved website must be fully operational (active and accessible to potential Clients) within 90 Calendar Days after Grant Agreement execution. Upon termination of the resultant Grant Agreement, Grantee must transfer the website domain to HHSC in accordance with directions provided by the TTF program.
 3. Procuring informational or educational materials used in the direct delivery of services to Clients. All materials to be used as part of the Project shall be approved in writing by HHSC prior to distribution to Clients. Informational and education materials must be provided to HHSC within 30 Calendar Days of Grant Agreement execution and reviewed before the distribution of new material developed during the Grant Agreement period can occur. All materials developed or used by Grantees as part of a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA are the property of HHSC. Grantees must ensure that all informational or educational materials are available, at a minimum, in both English and Spanish, and must ensure materials available to Clients with limited English proficiency are available in languages other than English based on the individual need of the Client.
- E. Contingency Plan: To ensure personnel continuity, the Grantee shall provide a contingency plan, within five (5) Calendar Days of a Key Personnel becoming vacant, if the Key Personnel vacancy is expected to exceed ten (10) Calendar Days. At a

minimum, the plan should include the specific names of the substitute agency personnel who have been assigned to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the absent Key Personnel members. This information must be submitted to the assigned HHSC contract manager.

- F. Grantee's Key Personnel must ensure all of the following:
1. All Project staff working directly with Clients must have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide the services, work with the target population, and meet the requirements of this RFA.
 2. All staff who hold a license or certificate to perform Project services, maintain the requirement licensure and certifications through the life of the project; and
 3. Grantee staff overseeing the Project Grant Agreement are required to attend all contract-related trainings and meetings, unless notification detailing the reason(s) for a program manager's absence has been provided to HHSC prior to training/meeting.
- G. Grantees shall maintain a secure Project database for all Project activities including, but not limited to, the Clients served, services delivered directly to Clients, Client demographic data, and Client intake and assessment data.
1. The information to be included in the project database must include, at a minimum, the elements required to be reported in **Section 2.8, Performance Measures and Monitoring** and in compliance in a manner prescribed by HHSC.
 2. All Clients must be assigned a unique identifier. The Client's social security number protected health information, or other personally identifiable information must not be used as an identifier.
- H. Applicant may not affiliate with any entity that performs elective abortion procedures or any elective abortion provider affiliate at any time during the term of this Grant Agreement.
- I. Grantee must ensure that all Client informational material and grievance policies include HHSC Ombudsman's office contact information and complaint language listed below: If you have a complaint that is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can contact the HHS Office of the Ombudsman by calling 1-877-787-8999, selecting a language, and then Option 3, or by making an online submission at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/your-rights/hhs-office-ombudsman>
- J. Grantee's facilities must be in good repair and in compliance with applicable local health, fire, electrical and building safety codes. Grantee's facilities must be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure accessibility for persons with physical disabilities.
- K. Applicants are prohibited from the following and must certify the same, see **Exhibit A-1, Thriving Texas Families Program Affirmations and Solicitation Acceptance Form**:
1. Performing or promoting Elective Abortions; or

2. Being an Affiliate of any entity or individual that performs or Promotes Elective Abortions

2.7 REQUIRED REPORTS

HHSC will monitor Grantee’s performance, including, but not limited to, through review of financial and programmatic reports and performance measures, under any Grant Agreement awarded as a result of this RFA. Each Grantee awarded a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA must submit the required reports by the deadlines listed below.

REPORT	DUE DATE
Reporting Workbook and Reporting Workbook Supplement – Monthly	The 15 th of each month following the month being reported.
Billing Workbook – Monthly	The 15 th of each month following the month being reported.

2.7.1 Monthly Reports

A. Grantees must submit the monthly Reporting Workbook and Reporting Workbook Supplement, provided by HHSC, in a manner prescribed by HHSC, 15 Calendar Days after the last day of the previous month. The Reporting Workbook and Reporting Workbook Supplement will detail the operations of the Project for the preceding month. Additional requirements, clarifications and reporting items may be added by HHSC as information needs change. At a minimum, the Reporting Workbook and Reporting Workbook Supplement shall include the following Client demographics and services provided:

1. Clients Served (de-identified individual level data);
2. Client Gender;
3. Client type, see **Section 2.3, Eligible Population**;
4. Client County of residence;
5. County where service was provided;
6. Client age at initial enrollment in the project;
7. Gestational age at program enrollment;
8. Ethnicity;
9. Number of current children;
10. Highest level of education completed;

11. Client service utilization (by service type) See **Section 2.5, Eligible Activities;**
 12. Pre and Post evaluation data See **Section 2.6, Program Requirements;**
 13. Client needs identified at intake;
 14. Data relevant to identified outcomes for the Project;
 15. Project successes and barriers to implementation; and
 16. Communication and outreach efforts in the reporting month.
- B. Monitoring Activities, which may include, but are not limited to:
1. The results of the monitoring;
 2. Any findings regarding performance of internal quality assurance;
 3. Any training needs identified and resulting actions; and
 4. Any corrective action taken and the resolution of any issues; and
 5. Other Project information determined relevant by HHSC.

2.7.2 Billing Workbook

Grantees must submit the monthly Billing Workbook, in a manner prescribed by HHSC, 15 Calendar Days after the last day of the previous month. The Billing Workbook includes expenses to be reimbursed from state funds for a particular month's reporting period. Expenditures reported must be allowable and be supported by documentation.

Additional requirements, clarifications, and report items may be added by HHSC as information needs change.

Grantee shall provide all applicable reports in the format specified by HHSC in an accurate, complete, and timely manner and shall maintain appropriate supporting backup documentation. Failure to comply with submission deadlines for required reports, or other requested information may result in HHSC, in its sole discretion, placing the Grantee on financial hold without first requiring a corrective action plan in addition to pursuing any other corrective or remedial actions under the Grant Agreement.

2.8 PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND MONITORING

HHSC will look solely to Grantee for the performance of all Grantee obligations and requirements in a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA.

Grant Agreement(s) awarded as a result of this RFA are subject to HHSC's performance monitoring activities throughout the duration of the Grant Project Period. This evaluation may include a reassessment of project activities and services to determine whether they continue to be effective throughout the grant term.

Grantees must regularly collect and maintain data that measures the performance and effectiveness of activities under a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA in the manner, and within the timeframes specified in this RFA and resulting Grant Agreement, or as otherwise specified by HHSC. Grantees must submit the necessary information and documentation regarding all requirements, including reports and other deliverables, and must report on the monthly Reporting Workbook and Reporting Workbook Supplemental 15 Calendar Days after the last day of the previous month, on the following measures:

- A. Number of Unduplicated Clients being served under the Proposed Project. It is expected that Grantees demonstrate by the end of the fiscal year that at least 90% of their projected number of Clients that were served;
- B. Number of Clients that demonstrate improved outcomes as identified by the Proposed Project and outlined in **Form F, Narrative Application**. It is expected that Grantees demonstrate by the end of the fiscal year that at least 75% of Clients served demonstrate improvement in one or more of the identified Proposed Project outcomes, as identified in **Form F, Narrative Application**;
- C. Number of Clients that receive services in accordance with their needs. It is expected that Grantees demonstrate that by the end of the fiscal year at least 75% of Clients who complete a post evaluation report receiving services in accordance with their needs; and
- D. Number of required reports submitted timely. It is expected that Grantees demonstrate that 90% of all required reports to HHSC are submitted by their deadlines.

The client targets will be set based upon:

- A. The amount of funding Grantees are awarded;
- B. Number of unduplicated Clients being served under the Proposed Project; and
- C. The proposed Number of Clients that demonstrate improved outcomes as identified by the Proposed Project and in **Form F, Narrative Application**.

If requested by HHSC, the Grantee shall report on the progress towards completion of the Grant Project and other relevant information as determined by HHSC during the Grant Project Period. To remain eligible for renewal funding, if any, the Grantee must be able to show the scope of services provided and their impact, quality, and levels of performance against approved goals, and that Grantee's activities and services effectively address and achieve the Project's stated purpose.

Grantees shall be responsible for monitoring the functioning of the Project and the quality of all Client services provided. This shall include the development and implementation of a process and schedule for monitoring the performance and cost effectiveness of services provided, as well as internal evaluations of quality.

Grantees shall take corrective action at any time the Project encounters operational difficulties or the Grantee's staff fail to follow contractual or legal requirements or program policies or procedures.

Grantees shall provide HHSC evidence of insufficiencies and corrective action(s) by Grantee to correct insufficiencies, including repayment of funds as applicable, upon request. HHSC must be notified of any insufficiencies or corrective action(s) in the subsequent month's Reporting Workbook and Reporting Supplemental Workbook, see **Section 2.7, Required Reports**.

Grantee agrees that HHSC staff and its representatives may monitor and audit Grantee performance under its awarded grant.

Grantee agrees to cooperate fully and assist with the coordination of the activities listed below, including but not limited to:

- A. Periodic site visits to monitor for compliance with federal and state requirements;
- B. Efficient use of public funds;
- C. Grant performance; and
- D. Adherence to the requirements set forth in this RFA.

If individual program compliance or performance is lacking, corrective action recommendations will be made through the Grant Agreement performance improvement plans.,

HHSC reserves the right, where allowed by legal authority, to redirect funds in the event of an agency financial shortfall. HHSC will monitor Grantee's expenditures on a monthly basis.

Acceptable quality level will be evaluated under either the standards provided in this section or in **Section 2.7, Required Reports**, the standards set forth in the Applicant's accepted offer, or the final negotiated standards-whichever is most advantageous to the Clients or HHSC. HHSC reserves the right to impose remedial measures including but not limited to:

- A. Written corrective action plans;
- B. Additional reporting;
- C. Withholding/offsetting payments;
- D. Termination of Grant Agreement; and/or

Applicant agrees to adhere to the [Texas Grant Management Standards \(TGMS\)](#), and work with HHSC staff regarding the management of funds received under this Grant Agreement.

2.9 FINAL BILLING SUBMISSION

Unless otherwise directed by the HHSC, Grantee shall submit a reimbursement or payment request as a final close-out invoice not later than 45 Calendar Days following the end of the term of the Grant Agreement. Reimbursement or payment requests received after the deadline may not be paid.

2.10 DATA USE AGREEMENT

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant agrees to be bound by the terms of **Exhibit F, Texas HHS System-Data Use Agreement Data Use Agreement v.8.5** or **Exhibit F-2, Governmental Entity Version HHS Data Use Agreement v.8.5**, including but not limited to the terms and conditions regarding **Exhibit F-1, Texas HHS System-Data Use Agreement, Attachment 2, Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI)**, attached to this RFA.

Article III. Applicant Eligibility Requirements

3.1 LEGAL AUTHORITY TO APPLY

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant certifies that it has legal authority to apply for the Grant Agreement that is the subject of this RFA and is eligible to receive awards. Further, Applicant certifies it will continue to maintain any required legal authority and eligibility throughout the entire duration of the grant term, if awarded.

Each Applicant may only submit one Grant Application.

3.2 APPLICATION SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

In order to be considered an Applicant eligible for evaluations, Applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A Applicant must have a physical business address in Texas.
- B. Applicant must be a public or private nonprofit organization with a current 501(c)(3) status.
- C. Applicant must have a minimum of one year of operational experience providing direct client services for pregnant women and families.
- D. Applicant must submit a complete Application that includes all documents listed in **Article XIII, Submission Checklist**.
- E. Applicant must not have a current Grant Agreement with HHSC under the HHSC Thriving Texas Families Program (formerly known as Alternatives to Abortion Program).

3.3 GRANT AWARD ELIGIBILITY

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, Applicant certifies that:

- A. Applicant and all of its identified subsidiaries intending to participate in the Grant

Agreement are eligible to perform grant-funded activities, if awarded, and are not subject to suspension, debarment, or a similar ineligibility determined by any State or federal entity;

- B. Applicant is in good standing under the laws of Texas and has provided HHS with any requested or required supporting documentation in connection with this certification;
- C. Applicant shall remain in good standing and eligible to conduct its business in Texas and shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Texas Secretary of State and the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts;
- D. Applicant is currently in good standing with all licensing, permitting, or regulatory bodies that regulate any or all aspects of Applicant's operations; and
- E. Applicant is not delinquent in taxes owed to any taxing authority of the State of Texas as of the effective date of this Grant Agreement.

3.4 GRANTS FOR POLITICAL POLLING PROHIBITED

Pursuant to the General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Section 4.03, none of the funds appropriated by the General Appropriations Act may be granted to or expended by any entity which performs political polling. This prohibition does not apply to a poll conducted by an academic institution as part of the institution's academic mission that is not conducted for the benefit of a particular candidate or party. By submitting a response to this RFA, Applicant certifies that it is not ineligible for a Grant Agreement pursuant to this prohibition.

Article IV. Project Period and Grant Term

4.1 PROJECT PERIOD

The Project Period is anticipated to be **April 1, 2024**, through **August 31, 2025**.

Extension of Project Period: The HHSC may, at its sole discretion, extend the Project Period for up to one (1) year to allow for the full expenditure of awarded funding and completion of Grant activities.

4.3 PROJECT CLOSEOUT

HHSC will programmatically and financially close the grant award and end the Grant Agreement when HHSC determines Grantee has completed all applicable actions and work in accordance with Grant Agreement requirements. The Grantee must submit all required financial, performance, and other reports as required in the Grant Agreement. The Project close-out date is 90 Calendar Days after the Grant Agreement end date, unless otherwise

noted in the original or amended Grant Agreement. Funds not obligated by Grantee by the end of the Grant Agreement term and not expended by the Project close-out date will revert to HHSC.

Article V. Grant Funding and Reimbursement Information

5.1 GRANT FUNDING SOURCE AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

The total amount of State funding available for the TTF Program Pilot Project grant program is **\$7,500,000** for the entire Project Period.

It is the HHSC's intention to make multiple awards to Applicants that successfully demonstrate innovative thriving families pilot projects that utilize research-based strategies which demonstrate outcomes identified in Texas Health and Safety Code Section 54.006 and meets the requirements as outlined in this RFA.

The maximum funding amount is \$2,000,000 for each Grant Agreement, subject to the availability of funds.

Applicants are strongly cautioned to only apply for grant funding they can responsibly expend during the Project Period to avoid lapsed funding at the end of the grant term. Successful Applications may not be funded to the full extent of Applicant's requested Budgets to ensure grant funds are available for the broadest possible array of communities and programs.

Reimbursement will only be made for actual, allowable, and allocable expenses that occur within the Project Period. No spending or costs incurred prior to the effective date of the award will be eligible for reimbursement.

5.2 NO GUARANTEE OF REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS

There is no guarantee of total reimbursements to be paid to any Grantee under any Grant Agreement, if any, resulting from this RFA. Grantees should not expect to receive additional or continued funding under future RFA opportunities and should maintain sustainability plans in case of discontinued grant funding. Any additional funding or future funding may require submission of a new Application through a subsequent RFA.

Receipt of an Application in response to this RFA does not constitute an obligation or expectation of any award of a Grant Agreement or funding of a grant award at any level under this RFA.

5.3 GRANT FUNDING PROHIBITIONS

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

- A. Any use of grant funds to replace (supplant) funds that have been budgeted for the same purpose through non-grant sources;
- B. Inherently religious activities such as prayer, worship, religious instruction, or proselytization;
- C. Lobbying or advocacy activities with respect to legislation or to administrative changes to regulations or administrative policy (cf. 18 U.S.C. § 1913), whether conducted directly or indirectly;
- D. Any portion of the salary of, or any other compensation for, an elected or appointed government official;
- E. Entertainment, amusement, or social activities and any associated costs including but not limited to admission fees or tickets to any amusement park, recreational activity or sporting event unless such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;
- F. Costs of promotional items, and memorabilia, including models, gifts, and souvenirs;
- G. Food, meals, beverages, or other refreshments, except for eligible per diem associated with grant-related travel, where pre-approved for working events, or where such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;
- H. Membership dues for individuals;
- I. Direct payment to a client;
- J. Any expense or service that is readily available at no cost to the Grant Project;
- K. Any activities related to fundraising;
- L. Equipment and other capital expenditures such as capital improvements, property losses and expenses, real estate purchases, mortgage payments, remodeling, the acquisition or construction of facilities, or other items that are unallowable pursuant to TxGMS.;
- M. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, State, or local law;
- N. Other unallowable costs as listed under TxGMS, Appendix 7, Selected Items of Cost Supplement Chart;
- O. Activities related to social media;
- P. Reimbursement for medical services, including family planning services, is unallowable under this RFA; and
- Q. Applicant Prohibitions.

5.4 COST SHARING OR MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

There are no cost sharing or match requirements, required by this RFA.

5.5 PAYMENT METHOD

Grant Agreement(s) awarded under this RFA will be funded on a cost reimbursement basis for reasonable, allowable and allocable Grant Project costs. Under the cost reimbursement payment method, Grantee is required to finance operations and will only be reimbursed for actual, allowable, and allocable costs incurred on a monthly basis, or whatever is appropriate to the grant and supported by adequate documentation. No additional payments will be rendered.

Article VI. Application Exhibits and Forms for Submission

Note: Applicants must refer to **Article XIII, Submission Checklist**, for the complete checklist of documents that must be submitted with an Application under this RFA.

6.1 NARRATIVE PROPOSAL

Using **Forms A**, and **F** attached to this RFA, Applicants shall provide an executive summary and describe their proposed activities, processes, and methodologies to satisfy all objectives described in **Article II, Scope of Grant Project**, including the Applicant's problem statement, supporting data, Project approach and activities, organizational capacity, performance management, target population, and use of research-informed practices. Applicants should identify all proposed tasks to be performed, including all Project activities, during the Grant Project Period. Applicants must complete and submit all required as attachments.

- A. **Form A, Respondent Information** includes information on the Applicant's organization and the proposed service area and requested funding amount.
- B. **Form F, Narrative Application** includes request for information on what the Proposed Project is, the proposed services, its research-based strategies and outcome evaluation. **Form F** also requires the following and must be included as attachments:
 - 1. The most recent two (2) years of audited financial statements or single audits. Applicant may not be eligible for award if audit reports or financial statements submitted with the Application identify concerns regarding the future viability of the Applicant, material non-compliance, or material weaknesses that were not satisfactorily addressed, as determined by HHSC.
 - 2. A copy of all board minutes for the time-period of September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023, and
 - 3. A copy of the current board bylaws.
 - 4. Applicant may not be eligible for award if they fail to submit the requested documents with the Application.

6.2 REQUESTED BUDGET

Attached **Form G, Budget Summary**, of this RFA is the template for submitting the requested Budget. Applicants must develop the requested Budget to support their Proposed Project and in alignment with the requirements described in this RFA.

Applicants must ensure that Project costs outlined in the requested Budget are reasonable, allowable, allocable, and developed in accordance with applicable State and federal grant requirements. Reasonable costs are those if, in nature and amount, do not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. A cost is allocable to a particular cost objective if the cost is chargeable or assignable to such cost objective in accordance with relative benefits received. See 2 CFR § 200.403 or TxGMS Cost Principles, Basic Considerations (pgs. 32-33), for additional information related to factors affecting allowability of costs.

Applicants must utilize the Budget template provided, **Form G, Budget Summary**, and identify all Budget line items. Budget categories must be broken out into specific Budget line items that allow HHSC to determine if proposed costs are reasonable, allowable, and necessary for the successful performance of the Project. Applicants must enter all costs in the Budget tables and explain why the cost is necessary and how the cost was established.

If selected for a grant award under this RFA, only HHSC-approved Budget items in the requested Budget may be considered eligible for reimbursement.

Submission of Form G, Budget Summary, is mandatory. Applicants that fail to submit a Form G, Budget Summary as set forth in this RFA with their Application will be disqualified.

6.3 INDIRECT COSTS

Applicants must have an approved Indirect Cost Rate (ICR) or request the de minimis rate to recover Indirect Costs. All Applicants are required to complete and submit **Form E, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire**, with required supporting documentation. The questionnaire initiates the acknowledgment or approval of an ICR for use with the HHSC cost-reimbursable Grant Agreements. Entities declining the use of Indirect Cost cannot recover Indirect Costs on any HHSC award or use unrecovered Indirect Costs as Match.

HHS accepts the following approved ICRs:

- A. Federally Approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement
- B. State of Texas Approved Indirect Cost Rate

If Applicant has an approved ICR, the letter must be submitted with **Form F, Narrative Application**. The HHSC, at its discretion, may request additional information to support any approved ICR agreement.

If the Applicant does not have an approved ICR agreement, the Applicant may be eligible for the ten percent (10%) de minimis rate or may request to negotiate an ICR with HHS.

For Applicants requesting to negotiate an ICR with HHS, the ICR Proposal Package will be provided by the HHS Federal Funds Indirect Cost Rate Group to successful Grantees. The ICR Proposal Package must be completed and returned to the HHS Federal Funds Indirect Cost Rate Group no later than three (3) months post-award.

The HHS Federal Funds Indirect Cost Rate Group will contact applicable Grantees after Grant Agreement execution to initiate and complete the ICR process. Grantees should respond within 30 Business Days, or the request will be cancelled, and Indirect Costs may be disallowed.

Once HHS acknowledges an existing rate or approves an ICR, the Grantee will receive one of the three Indirect Cost approval letters: ICR Acknowledgement Letter, ICR Acknowledgement Letter – Ten Percent De Minimis, or the ICR Agreement Letter.

If an Indirect Cost Rate Letter is required but it is not issued at the time of Grant Agreement execution, the Grant Agreement will be amended to include the Indirect Cost Rate Letter after the ICR Letter is issued.

Approval or acceptance of an ICR will not result in an increase in the amount awarded or affect the agreed-upon service or performance levels throughout the life of the award.

6.4 ADMINISTRATIVE APPLICANT INFORMATION

Using **Forms B, C, and D** attached to this RFA, Applicant must provide satisfactory evidence of its ability as an organization to manage and coordinate the types of activities described in this RFA.

A. Litigation and Contract History

Applicant must include **Form B, Entity Information, Contract and Litigation History** in its Application a complete disclosure of any alleged or significant contractual or grant failures.

In addition, Applicant must disclose any civil or criminal litigation or investigation pending over the last five (5) 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. See **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v2.4**. Applicant certifies it does not have any existing claims against or unresolved audit exceptions with the State of Texas or any agency of the State of Texas.

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 or grant obligations.

B. Internal Controls Questionnaire

Applicant must complete **Form C, Organization Financial Information and Internal Controls Questionnaire** and submit with its Application.

Article VII. RFA Administrative Information and Inquiries

7.1 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT	DATE/TIME
Funding Announcement Posting Date Posted to HHS Grants RFA and Texas eGrants websites	November 08, 2023
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification	November 13, 2023 by 5:00 a.m. Central Time
Tentative Date Answers to Questions or Requests for Clarification Posted	November 20, 2023
Application Submission Deadline NOTE: Applications must be <u>RECEIVED</u> by HHSC by this deadline if not changed by subsequent Addenda to be considered eligible.	December 08, 2023, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Anticipated Notice of Award	March 2024
Anticipated Project Start Date	April 01, 2024

Applicants must ensure their Applications are received by HHSC in accordance with the Application Submission Deadline (date and time) indicated in this Schedule of Events or as changed by subsequent Addenda posted to the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website.

All dates are tentative and HHSC reserves the right to change these dates at any time. At the sole discretion of HHSC, events listed in the Schedule of Events are subject to scheduling changes and cancellation. Scheduling changes or cancellation determinations made prior to the Application Submission Deadline will be published by posting an Addendum to the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website. After the Application Submission Deadline, 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 website. Each Applicant is responsible for checking the HHS Grants RFA website and Procurement Forecast for updates.

7.2 SOLE POINT OF CONTACT

All requests, questions or other communication about this RFA shall be made by email **only** to the Grant Specialist designated as HHSC's Sole Point of Contact listed below:

Name	Michele Rivers
Title	Grant Specialist, HHSC Procurement and Contracting Services
Address	Procurement and Contracting Services Building 1100 W 49th St. MC: 2020 Austin, TX 78756
Phone	512-406-2449
Email	Michele.Rivers@hhs.texas.gov

Applicants shall not use this e-mail address for submission of an Application. Follow the instructions for submission as outlined in Article VIII, Application Organization and Submission Requirements.

However, if expressly directed in writing by the Sole Point of Contact, Applicant may communicate with another designated HHS representative, e.g., during grant negotiations as part of the normal grant review process, if any.

Prohibited Communications: Applicants and their representatives shall not contact other HHS personnel regarding this RFA.

This restriction (on only communicating in writing by email with the sole point of contact identified above) does not preclude discussions between Applicant and agency personnel for the purposes of conducting business unrelated to this RFA.

Failure of an Applicant or its representatives to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of the Application.

7.3 RFA QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION

Written questions and requests for clarification of this RFA are permitted if submitted by email to the Sole Point of Contact by the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification established in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or as may be amended in Addenda, if any, posted to the HHS Grants RFA website.

Applicants' names will be removed from questions in any responses released. All questions and requests for clarification must include the following information. Submissions that do not include this information may not be accepted:

- A. RFA number;
- B. Section or paragraph number from this solicitation;
- C. Page number of this solicitation;
- D. Exhibit or other attachment and section or paragraph number from the exhibit or other attachment;
- E. Page number of the exhibit;
- F. Language, topic, section heading being questioned; and
- G. Question.

The following contact information must be included in the e-mail submitted with questions or requests for clarification:

- A. Name of individual submitting question or request for clarification;
- B. Organization name;
- C. Phone number; and
- D. E-mail address.

Questions or other written requests for clarification must be received by the Sole Point of Contact by the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification set forth in this Section 7.1, Schedule of Events, or as may be amended in Addenda, if any, posted to the HHS Grants RFA website.

HHSC may review and, at its sole discretion, may respond to questions or other written requests received after the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification.

7.4 AMBIGUITY, CONFLICT, DISCREPANCY, CLARIFICATIONS

Applicants must notify the Sole Point of Contact of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specification, omission or other error in the RFA in the manner and by the Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification. Each Applicant submits its Application at its own risk.

If Applicant fails to properly and timely notify the Sole Point of Contact of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specification, omission or other error in the RFA, Applicant, whether awarded a Grant Agreement or not:

- A. Shall have waived any claim of error or ambiguity in the RFA and any resulting Grant Agreement;
- B. Shall not contest the interpretation by HHSC of such provision(s); and
- C. Shall not be entitled to additional reimbursement, relief, or time by reason of any ambiguity, conflict, discrepancy, exclusionary specification, omission, or other error or its later correction.

7.5 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS OR REQUEST FOR CLARIFICATIONS

Responses to questions or other written requests for clarification will be consolidated and HHSC will post responses in one or more Addenda on the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website. Responses will not be provided individually to requestors.

HHSC reserves the right to amend answers previously posted at any time prior to the Application Submission Deadline . Amended answers will be posted on the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website in a separate, new Addendum or Addenda. It is Applicant's responsibility to check the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website or contact the Sole Point of Contact for a copy of the Addendum with the amended answers.

7.6 CHANGES, AMENDMENT OR MODIFICATION TO RFA

HHSC reserves the right to change, amend, modify or cancel this RFA. All changes, amendments and modifications or cancellation will be posted by Addendum on the HHS Grants RFA website.

It is the responsibility of each Applicant to periodically check the HHS Grants RFA website for any additional information regarding this RFA. Failure to check the posting website will in no way release any Applicant or awarded Grantee from the requirements of posted Addenda or additional information. No HHS agency will be responsible or liable in any regard for the failure of any individual or entity to receive notification of any posting to the websites or for the failure of any Applicant or awarded Grantee to stay informed of all postings to these websites. If the Applicant fails to monitor these websites for any changes or modifications to this RFA, such failure will not relieve the Applicant of its obligation to fulfill the requirements as posted.

7.7 EXCEPTIONS

Applicants are highly encouraged, in lieu of including exceptions in their Applications, to address all issues that might be advanced by way of exception by submitting Exhibit E, Exceptions or questions or requests for clarification pursuant to **Section 7.3, RFA Questions and Requests for Clarification**.

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

Article VIII. Application Organization and Submission Requirements

8.1 APPLICATION RECEIPT

Applications must be received by HHSC by the Application Submission Deadline specified in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda. HHSC will date and time stamp all Applications upon receipt. Applications received after the Application Submission Deadline may be ruled ineligible. Applicants should allow for adequate time for submission before the posted Application Submission Deadline.

No HHS agency will be held responsible for any Application that is mishandled prior to receipt by HHSC. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure its Application is received by HHSC before the Application Submission Deadline. No HHS agency will be responsible for any technical issues that result in late delivery, non-receipt of an Application, inappropriately identified documents, or other submission issue that may lead to disqualification.

Note: All Applications become the property of HHSC after submission and receipt and will not be returned to Applicant.

Applicants understand and acknowledge that issuance of this RFA or retention of Applications received in response to this RFA in no way constitutes a commitment to award Grant Agreement(s) as a result of this RFA.

8.2 APPLICATION SUBMISSION

By submitting an Application in response to this solicitation, Applicant represents and warrants that the individual submitting the Application and any related documents on behalf of the Applicant is authorized to do so and binds the Applicant under any Grant Agreement that may result from the submission of an Application.

8.3 REQUIRED SUBMISSION METHOD

Applicants must submit their completed Applications by the Application Submission Deadline provided in the **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, using one of the approved methods identified below. Applications submitted by any other method (e.g. facsimile, email) will not be considered and will be disqualified.

A. Submission Option #1 HHS Online Bid Room: Applicants shall upload the following documents to the Online Bid Room utilizing the procedures in **Exhibit G, Online Bid Room**. **File Size Limitation:** Restriction to 250MB per file attachment.

1. One (1) copy marked as “Original Application” that contains the Applicant’s entire Application in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file.
2. One (1) copy of the completed **Form G, Budget Summary**, in its original Excel format.
3. One (1) copy of the complete Application marked as “Public Information Act Copy,” if applicable, in accordance with **Section 12.1, Texas Public Information Act**, in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file.

B. Submission Option #2 Sealed Package with USB Drives: Applicants shall submit each of the following on separate USB drives:

1. One (1) USB drive with the complete Application file marked as “Original Application” in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file. Include the USB in a separate envelope within the sealed Application package and mark the USB and envelope with “Original Application.” USB drive must include the completed **Form G, Budget Summary**, in its original Excel format.
2. One (1) USB drive with a copy of the complete Application file marked as “Public Information Act Copy,” if applicable and in accordance with **Section 12.1, Texas Public Information Act**. The copy must be in a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file. Include the USB in a separate envelope within the sealed package and mark the USB and envelope with “Public Information Act Copy” or “PIA Copy.”

Applicant must deliver Applications submitted via USB by one of the methods below.

Overnight/Express/Priority Mail	Hand Delivery
<p style="text-align: center;">Health and Human Services Commission ATTN: Response Coordinator Tower Building, Room 108 1100 W. 49th St., MC 2020 Austin, Texas 78756</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Health and Human Services Commission ATTN: Response Coordinator Procurement & Contracting Services Building 1100 W. 49th St., MC 2020 Austin, Texas 78756</p>

Sealed packages must be clearly labeled with the following:

RFA No:	HHS0013943
RFA TITLE	Thriving Texas Families Program Pilot Projects
APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE	December 08, 2023 by 10:30 a.m.
SOLE POINT OF CONTACT’S NAME:	Michele Rivers
APPLICANT’S LEGAL NAME:	

Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring the USB drives are submitted in sealed packaging that is sufficient to prevent damage to contents and delivered by overnight or express mail, or hand delivery to the addresses above. HHSC agency will be responsible or liable for any damage.

8.4 COSTS INCURRED FOR APPLICATION

All costs and expenses incurred in preparing and submitting an Application in response to this RFA and participating in the RFA selection process are entirely the responsibility of the Applicant.

8.5 APPLICATION COMPOSITION

All Applications must:

- A. Be responsive to all RFA requirements;
- B. Be clearly legible;
- C. Be presented using font type Verdana, Arial, or Times New Roman, font size 10 or 12 pt., in **Form F, Narrative Application**. Responses in **Form F, Narrative Application** should be limited to 2,000 characters.
- D. Include page numbering for each section of the Application; and
- E. Include signature of Applicant’s authorized representative on all exhibits and forms requiring a signature. Copies of the Application documents should be made after signature.

8.6 APPLICATION ORGANIZATION

The completed Application file must:

- A. Be organized in the order outlined in the **Article XIII, Submission Checklist**, and include all required sections (e.g., “Administrative Information,” “Narrative Proposal,” and “Exhibits to be Submitted with Application,”).
 - 1. **Form G, Budget Summary**, is to be submitted in its original Excel format.
 - 2. Each Application section must have a cover page with the Applicant’s legal name, RFA number, and Name of Grant identified.
- B. Include all required documentation, exhibits, and forms completed and signed, as applicable. Copies of forms are acceptable, but all copies must be identical to the original. All exhibits must be submitted and obtained directly from the posted RFA package; previous versions and copies are not allowed or acceptable.

8.7 APPLICATION WITHDRAWALS OR MODIFICATIONS

Prior to the Application Submission Deadline set forth in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, an Applicant may:

- A. Withdraw its Application by submitting a written request to the Sole Point of Contact; or
- B. Modify its Application by submitting an entirely new submission, complete in all respects, using the method of submission set forth in this RFA. The modification must be received by HHSC by the Application Submission Deadline set forth in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda.

No withdrawal or modification request received after the Application Submission Deadline, set forth in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, will be considered. Additionally, in the event of multiple Applications received, the most timely received and/or modified Application will replace the Applicant’s original and all prior submission(s) in its entirety and the original submission(s) will not be considered.

Article IX. Application Screening and Evaluation

9.1 OVERVIEW

A three-step selection process will be used:

- A. Application screening to determine whether the Applicant meets the minimum requirements of this RFA;
- B. Evaluation based upon specific criteria; and
- C. Final selection based upon State priorities and other relevant factors, as outlined in **Section 10.1, Final Selection**.

9.2 INITIAL COMPLIANCE SCREENING OF APPLICATIONS

All Applications received by the Application Submission Deadline as outlined in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, will be screened by HHSC to determine which Applications meet all the minimum requirements of this RFA and are deemed responsive and qualified for further consideration. See **Section 3.2, Application Screening Requirements**.

At the sole discretion of HHSC, Applications with errors, omissions, or compliance issues may be considered non-responsive and may not be considered. The remaining Applications will continue to the evaluation stage and will be considered in the manner and form as which they are received. HHSC reserves the right to waive minor informalities in an Application. A “minor informality” is an omission or error that, in the determination of HHSC if waived or modified, would not give an Applicant an unfair advantage over other Applicants or result in a material change in the Application or RFA requirements. **Note:** Any disqualifying factor set forth in this RFA does not constitute an informality (e.g., **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v 2.4**, or **Form G, Budget Summary**).

HHSC, at its sole discretion, may give an Applicant the opportunity to submit missing information or make corrections at any point after receipt of Application. The missing information or corrections must be submitted to the Sole Point of Contact e-mail address in **Section 7.2, Sole Point of Contact**, by the deadline set by HHSC. Failure to respond by the deadline may result in the rejection of the Application and the Applicant’s not being considered for award.

9.3 QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION FOR APPLICATIONS

HHSC reserves the right to ask questions or request clarification or revised documents for a submitted Application from any Applicant at any time prior to award. HHSC reserves the right to select qualified Applications received in response to this RFA without discussion of the Applications with Applicants.

9.4 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated and scored in accordance with the following scoring criteria using **Exhibit D, Evaluation Tool**.

Scoring Criteria: Qualified Applications shall be evaluated based upon:

1. Pilot Project’s Use of Research Based Strategies (45%);
2. Pilot Project Outcomes (35%); and
3. Pilot Project Target Population (20%).

9.5 PAST PERFORMANCE

HHSC reserves the right to request additional information and conduct investigations as necessary to review any Application. By submitting an Application, the Applicant generally releases from liability and waives all claims against any party providing information about the Applicant at the request of HHSC.

HHSC may examine Applicant's past performance which may include, but is not limited to, information about Applicant provided by any governmental entity, whether an agency or political subdivision of the State of Texas, another state, or the federal government.

HHSC, at its sole discretion, may also initiate investigations or examinations of Applicant performance based upon media reports. Any negative findings, as determined by HHSC in its sole discretion, may result in HHSC removing the Applicant from further consideration for award.

Past performance information regarding Applicants may include, but is not limited to:

- A. Notices of termination;
- B. Cure notices;
- C. Assessments of liquidated damages;
- D. Litigation;
- E. Audit reports;
- F. Non-renewals of grants or Grant Agreements based on Applicant's unsatisfactory performance; and
- G. Any historical non-compliance with regulatory and/or licensing requirements may disqualify an Applicant.

Applicants also may be rejected as a result of unsatisfactory past performance under any grant(s) or Grant Agreement(s) as reflected in vendor performance reports, reference checks, or other sources. An Applicant's past performance may be considered in the initial screening process and prior to making an award determination.

Reasons for which an Applicant may be denied a Grant Agreement at any point after Application submission include, but are not limited to:

- A. If applicable, Applicant has an unfavorable report or grade on the CPA Vendor Performance Tracking System (VPTS). VPTS may be accessed at: <https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/programs/vendor-performance-tracking>.

9.6 COMPLIANCE FOR PARTICIPATION IN STATE CONTRACTS

Prior to award of a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA and in addition to the initial screening of Applications, all required verification checks will be conducted.

The information (e.g., legal name and, if applicable, assumed name (d/b/a), tax identification number, Unique Entity Identifier (“UEI,” a unique identifier created via SAM.gov, which replaces the previously used DUNS)) provided by Applicant will be used to conduct these checks. At HHSC’s sole discretion, Applicants found to be barred, prohibited, or otherwise excluded from award of a Grant Agreement may be disqualified from further consideration under this solicitation, pending satisfactory resolution of all compliance issues.

Checks include:

A. State of Texas Debarment and Warrant Hold

Applicant must not be debarred from doing business with the State of Texas (<https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/programs/vendor-performance-tracking/debarred-vendors.php>) or have an active warrant or payee hold placed by the Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA).

B. U.S. System of Award Management (SAM) Exclusions List

Applicant must not be excluded from contract participation at the federal level. This verification is conducted through SAM, the official website of the U.S. Government which may be accessed at:

<https://www.sam.gov/SAM/pages/public/searchRecords/search.jsf>

C. Divestment Statute Lists

Applicant must not be listed on the Divestment Statute Lists provided by CPA, which may be accessed at:

<https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/publications/divestment.php>

1. Companies that boycott Israel;
2. Companies with Ties to Sudan;
3. Companies with Ties to Iran;
4. Foreign Terrorist Organizations; and
5. Companies with Ties to Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

D. HHS Office of Inspector General

Applicant must not be listed on the HHS Office of Inspector General Texas Exclusions List for people or businesses excluded from participating as a provider:

<https://oig.hhsc.texas.gov/exclusions>.

E. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Applicant must not be listed on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General's List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (LEIE), excluded from participation as a provider, unless a valid waiver is currently in effect: <https://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/>.

Additionally, if a subrecipient under a federal award, the Grantee shall comply with requirements regarding registration with the U.S. Government's System for Award Management (SAM). This requirement includes maintaining an active SAM registration and the accuracy of the information in SAM. The Grantee shall review and update information at least annually after initial SAM registration and more frequently as required by 2 CFR Part 25.

For Grantees that may make procurements using grant funds awarded under the Grant Agreement, Grantee must check SAM Exclusions that contain the names of ineligible, debarred, and/or suspended parties. Grantee certifies through acceptance of a Grant Agreement it will not conduct business with any entity that is an excluded entity under SAM.

HHSC reserves the right to conduct additional checks to determine eligibility to receive a Grant Agreement.

Article X. Award of Grant Agreement Process

10.1 FINAL SELECTION

After initial screening for eligibility and Application completeness, and initial evaluation against the criteria listed in **Section 9.4, Evaluation Criteria**, the HHSC may apply other considerations such as program policy or other selection factors that are essential to the process of selecting Applications that individually or collectively achieve program objectives. In applying these factors, the HHSC may consult with internal and external subject matter experts. The funding methodology for issuing final Grant Agreements may include the following identified factors:

- A. Total number of unduplicated clients served;
- B. The number of HHSC identified outcomes addressed through the project; and
- C. Other factors determined relevant by HHSC.

The HHSC will make final funding decisions based on Applicant eligibility, evaluation rankings, geographic distribution across the State, State priorities, reasonableness, availability of funding cost-effectiveness, project feasibility, and likelihood of Proposed Project success.

Final award amounts will be determined by several factors including but not limited to the total number of unduplicated clients served, the number of HHSC identified outcomes addressed through the project, and other factors determined relevant by HHSC. Applicant must provide pilot project services directly. Applications that utilize a subcontracted service model will not be considered for award.

All funding recommendations will be considered for approval by HHSC Family Health Services Deputy Executive Commissioner, or their designee.

10.2 NEGOTIATIONS

After selecting Applicants for award, the HHSC may engage in negotiations with selected Applicants. As determined by HHSC, the negotiation phase may involve direct contact between the selected Applicant and HHS representatives by virtual meeting, by phone and/or by email. Negotiations should not be interpreted as a preliminary intent to award funding unless explicitly stated in writing by the HHSC and is considered a step to finalize the Application to a state of approval and discuss proposed grant activities. During negotiations, selected Applicants may expect:

- A. An in-depth discussion of the submitted Application and requested Budget; and
- B. Requests from the HHSC for revised documents, clarification or additional detail regarding the Applicant's submitted Application. These clarifications and additional details, as required, must be submitted in writing by Applicant as finalized during the negotiation.

10.3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTED PARTIES

Subject to certain specified exceptions, Section 2252.908 of the Texas Government Code, Disclosure of Interested Parties, applies to a Grant Agreement of a State agency that has a value of \$1 million or more; requires an action or vote by the governing body of the entity or agency before the Grant Agreement may be signed; or is for services that would require a person to register as a lobbyist under Chapter 305 of the Texas Government Code.

One of the requirements of Section 2252.908 is that a business entity (defined as "any entity recognized by law through which business is conducted, including a sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation") must submit a Form 1295, Certificate of Interested Parties, to the HHSC at the time the business entity submits the signed Grant Agreement.

Applicant represents and warrants that, if selected for award of a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA, Applicant will submit to the HHSC a completed, certified and signed Form 1295, Certificate of Interested Parties, at the time the potential Grantee submits the signed Grant Agreement.

The Form 1295 involves an electronic process through the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC). The online process for completing the Form 1295 may be found on the TEC public website at: https://www.ethics.state.tx.us/whatsnew/elf_info_form1295.htm.

Additional instructions and information to be used to process the Form 1295 will be provided by the HHSC to the potential Grantee(s). Grantee may contact Sole Point of Contact or designated HHSC contract manager for information needed to complete Form 1295.

If the potential Grantee does not submit a completed, certified and signed TEC Form 1295 to the HHSC with the signed Grant Agreement, the HHSC is prohibited by law from executing a Grant Agreement, even if the potential Grantee is otherwise eligible for award. The HHSC, as determined in its sole discretion, may award the Grant Agreement to the next qualified Applicant, who will then be subject to this procedure.

10.4 EXECUTION AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF GRANT AGREEMENT(S)

The HHSC intends to award one or more Grant Agreements as a result of this RFA. However, not all Applicants who are deemed eligible to receive funds are assured of receiving a Grant Agreement.

At any time and at its sole discretion, HHSC reserves the right to cancel this RFA, make partial award, or decline to award any Grant Agreement(s) as a result of this RFA.

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

HHSC may announce tentative funding awards through an “Intent to Award Letter” once HHSC Family Health Services Deputy Executive Commissioner and relevant HHSC approval authorities have given approval to initiate and/or execute grants. Receipt of an “Intent to Award Letter” does not authorize the recipient to incur expenditures or begin Project activities, nor does it guarantee current or future funding.

Upon execution of a Grant Agreement(s) as a result of this RFA, HHSC will post a notification of all grants awarded to the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website.

Article XI. General Terms and Conditions

11.1 GRANT APPLICATION DISCLOSURE

In an effort to maximize State resources and reduce duplication of effort, the HHSC, at its discretion, may require the Applicant to disclose information regarding the Application for or award of State, federal, and/or local grant funding to the Applicant or subgrantee or

subcontractor (i.e. organization who will participate, in part, in the operation of the Project) within the past two years to provide services similar as those in the Proposed Project.

11.2 TEXAS HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES (HUBS)

In procuring goods and services using funding awarded under this RFA, Grantee must use HUBs or other designated businesses as required by law or the terms of the State or federal grant under which this RFA has been issued. See, e.g., 2 CFR § 200.321. If there are no such requirements, HHSC encourages Applicant to use HUBs to provide goods and services.

For information regarding the Texas HUB program, refer to CPA's website: <https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/vendor/hub/>.

Article XII. Application Confidential or Proprietary Information

12.1 TEXAS PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT – APPLICATION DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

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

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

A. Mark Original Application:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

subject to public disclosure under the PIA. The HHSC does not have authority to agree that any information submitted will not be subject to disclosure. Disclosure is governed by the PIA and by rulings of the Office of the Texas Attorney General. Applicants are advised to consult with their legal counsel concerning disclosure issues resulting from this process and to take precautions to safeguard trade secrets and proprietary or otherwise confidential information. The HHSC 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>.

12.2 APPLICANT WAIVER – INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

SUBMISSION OF ANY DOCUMENT TO ANY HHS AGENCY IN RESPONSE TO THIS SOLICITATION CONSTITUTES AN IRREVOCABLE WAIVER, AND AGREEMENT BY THE SUBMITTING PARTY TO FULLY INDEMNIFY THE STATE OF TEXAS AND HHS FROM ANY CLAIM OF INFRINGEMENT REGARDING THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS OF THE SUBMITTING PARTY OR ANY THIRD PARTY FOR ANY MATERIALS SUBMITTED TO HHS BY THE SUBMITTING PARTY.

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Article XIII. Submission Checklist

HHSC, in its sole discretion, will review all Applications received and will determine if any or all Applications which do not include complete, signed copies of these exhibits, will be disqualified or whether additional time will be permitted for submission of the incomplete or missing exhibits. If additional time is permitted, Applicants will be notified in writing of the opportunity to provide the missing documentation by a specified deadline. Failure by an Applicant to submit the requested documentation by the deadline WILL result in disqualification. Applications that do not include Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v2.4, Exhibit A-1, TTF Affirmations and Solicitation Acceptance Form (completed and signed), and Form G, Budget Summary (completed), will be disqualified. See Section 9.2, Initial Compliance Screening of Applications for further detail.

This Submission Checklist identifies the documentation, exhibits and forms that are required to be submitted as part of the Application.

Applicant must complete and submit to HHSC all of required exhibits and forms outlined in this RFA.

The Application must be organized in the order below and include each required section and the exhibit and forms identified within a section:

A. Administrative Information

- 1. **Form B**, Entity Information, Contract and Litigation History _____
- 2. **Form C**, Organization Financial Information and Internal Controls _____
- 3. **Form D**, Nonprofit Entity, if applicable _____

B. Narrative Proposal

- 1. **Form A**, Respondent Information _____
- 2. **Form F**, Narrative Application, including the required attachments: _____
 - a. The most recent two (2) years of audited financial statements or single audits.
 - b. A copy of all board minutes for the following time-period September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023, and
 - c. A copy of the current board bylaws.

C. Budget Summary is mandatory and must be submitted with the Application, in the original format (Excel), for the Application to be considered responsive. Applications received without the completed Budget Summary will be disqualified.

- 1. **Form G**, Budget Summary _____

D. Indirect Cost

Form E, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect
Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire _____

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

1. **Exhibit A**, HHS Solicitation Affirmations version 2.4

Exhibit A is mandatory and must be completed, signed and submitted for the Application to be considered responsive. Applications received without Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmation and Exhibit A-1, TTF Affirmation and Solicitation Acceptance Form or with an unsigned Exhibit A may be disqualified.

2. **Exhibit A-1**, TTF Affirmations and Solicitation Acceptance Form _____

3. **Exhibit E**, Exceptions, if applicable _____

4. **Exhibit F**, HHS Data Use Agreement v.8.5 **or**

Exhibit F-2, Governmental Entity Version HHS Data Use Agreement v8.5 _____

5. **Exhibit F-1**, Texas HHS System-Data Use Agreement- Attachment 2
Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI), _____

6. **Signed Addenda (s)** _____

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Article XIV. List of Exhibits and Forms Attached to RFA

Exhibits

Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations version 2.4

Exhibit A-1, Thriving Texas Families Program Affirmations and Solicitation Acceptance Form

Exhibit B, HHS Uniform Terms and Conditions – Grant, version 3.2

Exhibit C, Additional Provisions – Grant Funding, version 1.0

Exhibit D, Evaluation Tool

Exhibit E, Exceptions

Exhibit F, HHS System Data Use Agreement v8.5

Exhibit F-1, Texas HHS System-Data Use Agreement- Attachment 2 Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI)

Exhibit F-2, Governmental Entity Version HHS Data Use Agreement v8.5

Exhibit G, HHS Online Bid Room

Forms

Form A, Respondent Information

Form B, Entity Information, Contract and Litigation History

Form C, Organizational Financial Information and Internal Controls Questionnaire

Form D, Nonprofit Entity

Form E, Texas Health and Human Services System Indirect Costs Rate (ICR) Questionnaire

Form F, Narrative Application

Form G, Budget Summary