



TEXAS

Health and Human Services

Cecile E. Young, Executive Commissioner

Request for Applications (RFA)

Grant for

Service Members, Veterans, and Families (SMVF)

RFA No. HHS0015183

APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE

February 13, 2025, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time

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Section I. Executive Summary, Definitions, and Statutory Authority

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), the System Agency, is accepting Applications for the Service Members, Veterans, and Families (SMVF) Program.

The purpose of this program is to increase availability and accessibility of services and resources to Military-Connected Families in the State of Texas.

Applicants can access information regarding current Family Support Services (FSS) programs and FSS at the following website: <https://fss.hhs.texas.gov/>.

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

Grant Name:	Service Members, Veterans, and Families (SMVF)
RFA No.:	HHS0015183
Application Submission Deadline:	February 13, 2025, by 10:30 a.m.
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarifications:	January 16, 2025, by 5:00 p.m.
Estimated Total Available Funding:	Up to \$13,921,875.00 for the Project Period
Estimated Total Number of Awards:	7 to 12 awards
Estimated Max Award Amount:	State Fiscal Year annual awards will not exceed \$350,000.00 per Grant Agreement
Cost Sharing Required, if any:	Cost Sharing is encouraged but not required.
Anticipated Project Start Date:	September 1, 2025
Length of Project Period:	Five State Fiscal Years

Eligible Applicants:	Applicant must be a nonprofit corporation, as defined by Chapter 22 of the Texas Business Organization Code, or a governmental entity, and Applicant must submit a complete Application by the stated deadline. (Refer to Section 3.2, Application Screening Requirements.)
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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 **Section VIII, Application Organization and Submission Requirements**, and **Section 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” or “Addenda” means a written clarification or revision to this RFA, including exhibits, forms, and attachments, as issued and posted by HHSC to the HHS Grants RFA website. Each Addendum will be posted and must be signed by the Applicant and returned with its Application.

“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 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.”

“Assistance Listing Number” or “ALN” means 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).

“Basic Needs” means essentials for a Family to function and could include, but are not limited to, food, shelter, home furnishings, and clothes.

“Budget” means the financial plan for carrying out the Grant Project, as formalized in the Grant Agreement, including awarded funds and any required Cost Sharing, submitted as part of the Application in response to this RFA. An Applicant’s requested Budget may differ from the System Agency-approved Budget executed in the final Grant Agreement.

“Business Day” means 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.

“Calendar Day” means every day on the calendar, including weekends and public holidays.

“Caregiver” is an individual who attends to the needs of a child or youth who is Military-Connected.

“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.

“Community Strengths and Needs Assessment” or “CSNA” means an evaluation that the Applicant or Grantee develops and uses to identify community strengths, needs, assets, characteristics, challenges, and available resources.

“Contiguous County” or “Contiguous Counties” means any county whose boundary touches at any point with that of a Primary County.

“Deliverable” means the goods, services, and Work Product, including all reports and Project documentation, required to be provided by Grantee to the System Agency.

“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.

“Effective Date” means the date on which the Grant Agreement takes effect.

“Eligible County” means a Texas county that has a military installation and a high veteran population as indicated in Table 1: SMVF Eligible Counties.

“Equipment” means, pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.1, 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 \$10,000.00. See 2 CFR §200.1 for capital assets, computing devices, general purpose equipment, information technology systems, special purpose equipment, and supplies.

“Evidence-Based Program” means a Program Model that meets the following criteria:

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

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

“Family” or “Families” means more than one person who is Military-Connected and is receiving programming through this RFA and can include Caregivers, partners, children, youth, or parents.

“Family Support Services” or “FSS” means program within HHSC, formerly the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), which moved to HHSC effective September 1, 2024.

“FSS Program Staff” means employees who work for Family Support Services.

“Grant Agreement” means the agreement entered into by the System Agency 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 as “Contract.”

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

“Grant Term” refers to the base project period plus any renewal or extension of the Grant Agreement.

“HHS” includes both the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS).

“HHSC” means the Health and Human Services Commission.

“Index Child” or “Index Youth” means the child or youth for whom a Family’s eligibility for SMVF programming is based. This RFA refers to Index Child or Index Youth to indicate children or youth served. Index Child or Index Youth may be used interchangeably with “Participant.”

“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 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.

“Invoice” is a Grantee’s bill or written request for payment under the Grant Agreement for services performed.

“Military-Connected” is a Participant or individual that has a current or former direct relationship with the military.

“Non-Responsive” means the 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” means a measure that demonstrates the effect a service has on Participants, typically related to improvements in the lives of Participants regarding safety, permanency, and well-being.

“Output” means an indicator referring to activities, methods, and approaches and the immediate results generated because of program efforts (e.g., number of Families served).

“Participant” means a member of the population to be served by the Applicant’s organization. For the purposes of this grant, a Participant is a member of a Family or household who is receiving programming under this grant.

“Participant Record” refers to any information and documentation related to a Participant and the services provided to a Participant, as recorded and stored by the Grantee and service provider.

“PEIRS Enrollment ID” means the unique identification number for the enrolled Participant or Family member that is generated after a new enrollment is saved in PEIRS.

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

“Prevention and Early Intervention Reporting System” or “PEIRS” means the data reporting system used by FSS Grantees and FSS Program Staff to capture and report program and Grant-related information.

“Primary Caregiver” means the parent or Caregiver of the Index Child or Index Youth and is the person who is the primary Participant involved in the SMVF Program offerings.

“Primary County(ies)” is a county proposed in this RFA to receive SMVF services, to include regular outreach services, grant activities, and other grant initiatives.

“Priority Characteristics” means the traits that identify the youth, Caregivers, or Families who may receive programming.

“Program Model” means the Evidence-Based Program, Promising Practice Program, Evidence-Informed Program, or curriculum the Grantee implements.

“Program Staff” means employees working under the auspices of SMVF Grantees, including Sub-awardees and volunteers who will be providing support and programming to youth or their Families.

“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 activities within the Scope of the Grant Project 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..

“Project Work Plan” or “PWP” means the documentation of how the Grantee will implement and operate the SMVF grant initiative to achieve the Performance Measures outlined in the Grant Agreement.

“Promising Practice Program” means a Program Model that meets the following criteria:

- A. Has an active impact evaluation program or demonstrates a schedule for implementing an active impact evaluation program;

- B. Has been evaluated by at least one Outcome-based study demonstrating effectiveness or random, controlled trial in a homogeneous sample;
- C. Substantially complies with a program manual or design that specifies the purpose, Outcomes, duration, and frequency of the program services;
- D. Employs well-trained and competent Program Staff and provides continual relevant professional development opportunities; and
- E. Is research-based and grounded in relevant, empirical knowledge, and program-determined Outcomes.

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

“Referral” means the process whereby a Grantee provides Families with recommended external programming or resources that extend beyond the programming the Grantee provides through this RFA.

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

“Responsive” means the designation for when HHSC determines that an Application complies with all material aspects of the RFA, including that the Applicant has submitted all required documents.

“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.”

“Safe” means the state in which an Index Child or Index Youth is secure from maltreatment or the risk of danger or harm.

“Service Authorization” means the process whereby the Primary Caregiver consents to participation in programming by completing an enrollment form and any other documentation required by HHSC or the Grantee.

“Service Delivery Area” or “SDA” means the counties within which the Applicant proposes to provide SMVF programming.

“Service Member” is an individual who is serving or has served in one of the branches of the armed forces, the Reserve, or National Guard.

“SMVF” is the Service Members, Veterans, and Families program as funded through FSS.

“Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support” means a tool for planning, providing, and assessing quality programming. These standards establish how two key frameworks in the Family Strengthening and Support field, the Principles of Family Support Practice developed by Family Support America, and the Strengthening Families Framework and Approach developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, can be applied together programmatically. The standards demonstrate and measure how to work with families with a family-centered, strengths-based, multigenerational approach to support them to build research-based, evidence-informed Protective Factors that increase family stability, enhance child development, and reduce child abuse and neglect.

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

“Statement of Work” means the description of activities Grantee must perform to complete the Project, as specified in the Grant Agreement, and as may be amended.

“Subaward” means a written agreement that assigns portions of a Grantee’s obligations to a third party that the Grantee selects. The third party assumes some of the Grantee’s obligations while the Grantee remains completely responsible for all actions that the Subawardee performs. Subaward may be used interchangeably with the terms “Subcontract” or “Subgrant” for this RFA.

“Sub-awardee” means any entity that has entered into a Subaward with the Grantee to assume some of the Grantee’s obligations. Sub-awardee may be used interchangeably with the terms “Subcontractor” or “Subgrantee.”

“System Agency” means HHSC or DSHS, as applicable.

“Texas Grant Management Standards” or “TxGMS” means uniform grant and contract administration procedures, developed under the authority of Chapter 783 of the Texas Government Code, to promote the efficient use of public funds in local government and in programs requiring cooperation among local, State, and federal agencies. Under this Grant Agreement, TxGMS applies to Grantee except as otherwise provided by applicable law or directed by System Agency. Additionally, except as otherwise provided by applicable law, in the event of a conflict between TxGMS and applicable federal or State law, federal law prevails over State law and State law prevails over TxGMS.

1.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY

The System Agency is requesting Applications under Chapter 137 of the Texas Human Resources Code. State funds for this Grant Project are authorized under the Texas General Appropriations Act, Article II. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated State funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

Federal funding for this Grant Project is authorized under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), as amended, and codified in 42 U.S.C. §5116. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated federal funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. Federal funding awarded to the System Agency is through the program(s) listed below:

Federal Grant Program:	Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Grants
Federal Awarding Agency:	Administration for Children and Families
Funding Opportunity No.:	2302TXBCAP; 2402TXBCAP
Assistance Listing Number and Program Title:	93.590 Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Grants

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).

Section II. Scope of Grant Project

2.1 PURPOSE

This funding opportunity invites grant Applications requesting funding for the Service Members, Veterans, and Families (SMVF) Program. The purpose of this program is to increase availability and accessibility of services and resources to Military-Connected families throughout the State of Texas.

2.2 PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- A. FSS partners with community-based programs and agencies to provide a variety of services that benefit Texas children by reducing incidence of abuse, neglect, delinquency, and truancy. The SMVF Program is a community-based program that provides programming, coordinates resources, and promotes community efforts to support parents and Caregivers and their children impacted by military life. It is an outgrowth of the Military Families and Veterans Pilot Prevention Program (MFVPP), which was initiated in Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 because of H.B. 19 in the 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015. Under MFVPP, community providers in Bell, Bexar, and El Paso counties received grants to provide an array of services and develop or participate in local or regional coalitions for the purpose of improving service coordination and promoting child welfare, early childhood education, and other youth and family services. The SMVF Program goal and objectives address child abuse and neglect prevention, as well as family strengthening and well-being, by enhancing Protective Factors for Military-Connected families and increasing inter-organizational collaboration in counties with military installations or high veteran populations.
- B. Military-Connected families face a variety of unique challenges and circumstances, including regular separation, family and social instability, combat injury and disabilities, mental health challenges, disruptions in parenting, and increased Caregiver stress.¹ Recent studies regarding the impact of military deployments on families have further shown problems with sleep, higher stress levels, anxiety, aggression, and depression.² Additionally, current and former members of the military also experience high rates of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other social-emotional mental health challenges which can impact all members of their families. For a full review of research on the effects of military life and deployment on families and children, see <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/relationships/>.
- C. The State of Texas has the second highest veteran population in the United States with more than 1.4 million current and former members of the military, and the third largest population of active-duty Service Members. According to the Department of Defense, roughly 50% of active-duty and reserve military personnel are married, and

¹ Retrieved from <https://medlineplus.gov/veteransandmilitaryfamilyhealth.html>

² Retrieved from <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31249614/>

39% have minor children.³ It is critical that organizations and communities support Military-Connected families holistically to promote child well-being. The activities listed in paragraph (B) of this section can affect lasting changes for Military-Connected families, prevent child abuse and neglect, and strengthen communities.

- D. The initial MFVPP primarily focused on the three largest military communities in the State. Concurrently, PEI (FSS) contracted with Social Marketing (SUMA) and the Child and Family Research Partnership (CFRP) at the University of Texas at Austin LBJ School of Public Affairs to learn more from military members, families, and other programs across the nation to evaluate the effectiveness of programming and best practices in serving this important and underserved population. Through this research, additional trends and needs for military families were identified. As a result, PEI (FSS) expanded criteria for future programming to allow for greater capacity in meeting the needs for Military-Connected families.
- E. In State Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), PEI (FSS) introduced the SMVF program to encompass all Texas counties with proximity to military installations, expand the grant scope beyond MFVPP to include greater levels of service planning and service coordination in collaboration with community partners, and encourage organizations to increase the quality of supports targeted specifically at Military-Connected families across multiple programs in an organization or community.
- F. Military-Connected families show the greatest resilience when they are adequately prepared with resources, knowledge, and community support through hardships.^{4,5} Activities funded by this grant aim to support Military-Connected Families by placing systems and services to support a holistic approach to resilience preparation. Identifying and addressing these types of barriers will benefit Military-Connected families in Texas. Military families experience multiple layers of barriers and challenges to access adequate social services. Often, services are not geographically available. In other cases, military members experience perceived consequences or stigma around receiving social services, including retribution from command leadership. According to the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) model⁶, many enlisted members of the military fall below the poverty level, and those who do not often experience other economic limitations which reduces access to paid supports. Additionally, many services are unprepared or unequipped to handle the complexity of providing services to military families.
- G. For examples of a variety of formal support services for Military-Connected families see the following:
 - 1. Parenting support and programs (see <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/parenting/>);

³ Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK547615/>

⁴ See [Family Resilience in the Military \(Meadows, S.O., et. al\)](#)

⁵ See <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/military-resiliency-training>

⁶ Retrieved from <https://www.unitedforalice.org/national-overview>

2. Relationship support and programs (see <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/relationships/>);
3. Abuse prevention support and programs (see <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/preventing-violence-abuse/>); and
4. Service Provider resources and support (see <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/>).

2.3 ELIGIBLE POPULATION

- A. The eligible Participant population consists of Military-Connected youth and families. The parent or Caregiver must be either expecting a child or have at least one child aged 0 to 17.
- B. To be eligible to participate in Grantee’s SMVF Program, families must also exhibit at least two of the following Priority Characteristics:
 1. Behavioral concern;
 2. Childcare or childcare access concerns;
 3. Current or former military connection;
 4. Current or past alcohol abuse – Caregiver;
 5. Current or past alcohol abuse – Index Child/Index Youth;
 6. Current or past child maltreatment or child welfare involvement;
 7. Current or past conflict at school;
 8. Current or past criminal justice involvement – Index Child/Index Youth*;
 9. Current or past domestic or interpersonal violence*;
 10. Current or past use or abuse of other substance – Index Child/Index Youth;
 11. Developmental delay or disability – Caregiver*;
 12. Developmental delay or disability – Index Child/Index Youth*;
 13. Family dynamics or structure concern*;
 14. Family or household conflict*;
 15. High stress level*;
 16. Homeless, runaway, or housing instability*;
 17. Household contains an enrollee who is pregnant and under 21 years old*;
 18. Household has a child with developmental delays or disabilities;
 19. Household has a history of alcohol abuse or a need for alcohol abuse treatment;
 20. Household has a history of substance use or needs substance use treatment;
 21. Low school attainment – Caregiver;

- 22. Low-income household;
- 23. Mental health concern – Caregiver;
- 24. Mental health concern – Index Youth;
- 25. Parenting skills concern;
- 26. School engagement concern*; or
- 27. Social support concern.

*Note: Grantee should give priority to serving military families who present characteristics denoted with an asterisk.

2.4 ELIGIBLE SERVICE AREAS

The Applicant may apply for one or more Texas counties in which services will be provided as the Service Delivery Area (SDA) in **Form G, Project Work Plan**. The SDA must consist of at least one Eligible County (see Table 1: SMVF Eligible Counties).

- A. Under this RFA, the Applicant may propose to serve a single Eligible County or multiple counties contiguous to an Eligible County as Primary Counties.
- B. Identified services must be available to the entire Primary County or Counties. Services may not be denied to any Family that meets the eligibility requirements if capacity and funding allow for service provision.
- C. If an Applicant would like to serve multiple Eligible Counties that are not Contiguous Counties, the Applicant must submit a separate Application for each Eligible County that the Applicant proposes to serve.
- D. Under this RFA, FSS will award grants to provide SMVF programming and services in one or more of the following Eligible Counties:

SMVF Eligible Counties: Counties with Military Installations⁷ and top 20 high veteran population⁸ ages 17-44.

Table 1: SMVF Eligible Counties			
1. Bell	8. Dallas	15. Hidalgo	22. Tom Green
2. Bexar	9. Denton	16. Kleberg	23. Travis
3. Bowie	10. El Paso	17. Lubbock	24. Val Verde
4. Brazoria	11. Fort Bend	18. Montgomery	25. Wichita
5. Cameron	12. Galveston	19. Nueces	26. Williamson
6. Collin	13. Guadalupe	20. Tarrant	
7. Coryell	14. Harris	21. Taylor	

⁷ Retrieve from <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/military/installations>

⁸ Retrieve from https://www.va.gov/vetdata/veteran_population.asp

2.5 ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

This Grant Project may fund activities and costs within the Scope of Grant Project 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 because of this RFA.

2.5.1 Programming

Grantees must implement quality programming and services to meet program goals and objectives, ensuring competent and effective delivery of programming and services and promoting family well-being, positive parenting strategies, and healthy child and youth development.

The Applicant's proposed programming should be based on the needs and gaps in the proposed SDA as identified in the CSNA, see **Section 2.6.1 CSNA**. Applicant should also address how programming will lead to the effects and impact identified in the logic model, see **Section 2.6.2, Logic Model**.

The Applicant must propose and describe programming to directly engage with Military-Connected Families in **Form G, Project Work Plan**. The following are potential areas and programming options under this RFA (full descriptions are in **Section 2.6.2, Programming Descriptions**):

- A. Parent education;
- B. Mentoring;
- C. Post-High School Readiness (PHSR);
- D. Family Focused Activity;
- E. Support groups;
- F. Service planning and coordination;
- G. Counseling– Family and Individual;
- H. Basic Needs support;
- I. Financial Wellness;
- J. Childcare in conjunction with SMVF programming;
- K. Respite Care; and
- L. Other programming.

2.5.2 Programming Descriptions

A. Parent Education

1. Parent Education is the facilitation to an individual, Family, or group of Program Model-based skills approach sessions designed to promote healthy parent-child interaction, build parenting skills, and enhance Protective Factors.

2. The Applicant should select a Program Model and describe in **Form G, Project Work Plan**, how the proposed Program Model will meet the needs in the SDA. HHSC will review and approve the use of any proposed Program Model(s). The following is a non-comprehensive list of possible resources for consideration when selecting a Program Model:
 - a. The following are additional references for Program Model information and selection:
 - i. Penn State Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness (see <https://militaryfamilies.psu.edu/>);
 - ii. California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (see <https://www.cebc4cw.org/>);
 - iii. Results First Clearinghouse Database (see <https://evidence2impact.psu.edu/what-we-do/research-translation-platform/results-first-resources/clearing-house-database/>);
 - iv. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (see <https://www.samhsa.gov/resource-search/ebp/>);
 - v. Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse (see <https://preventionservices.acf.hhs.gov/>); and
 - vi. Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness: (see <https://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/model-search/>).
 - b. **Exhibit C, SMVF Curricula**, of this RFA offers a list of existing SMVF-specific curricula that could be used with Military-Connected Families. This will give the Applicant options to be aware of for potential programs for this population. The Applicant can propose additional curricula beyond those listed in the RFA.
3. Grantee must monitor for adherence to the Program Model with fidelity to developer instruction, including delivery and oversight.

B. Mentoring

Mentoring must primarily focus on facilitating an ongoing positive relationship between the youth and a caring adult role model who aids the younger person as they go through life. Mentoring takes place between young persons (i.e., mentees) and older or more experienced persons (i.e., mentors) who act in a nonprofessional helping capacity to provide support that benefits one or more areas of the mentee's development.

1. The Applicant must describe the program delivery model and guidelines for its mentoring program in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.

C. Post-High School Readiness (PHSR)

Post-High School Readiness refers broadly to preparing young people for their transition from school to the multiple pathways after high school graduation,

equipping youth with the experiences and skills necessary to successfully manage the responsibilities required upon entering college, career, and workplace environments. Readiness is achieved by acquiring the learning competencies, intellectual capacities, and experiences essential for all students to become lifelong learners and positive contributors to their families, workplaces, and communities.

1. Examples of Post-High School Readiness include, but are not limited, to:

- a. Career exploration and workforce readiness:
Provide a realistic view of work along with necessary skills and workplace ethics to successfully maintain employment. Activities to promote career planning and acquisition of workplace skills, including vocational training and academic planning specific to career goals. Assessment and planning integrate school experiences (coursework, extracurricular activities and vocational or career assessments) with community experiences (volunteer work, regular employment, job shadowing, and job fairs) toward career objectives. Other activities include job search assistance, interviewing skills training, assistance with disability-related accommodations, and job-finding training (including résumé preparation, information on non-traditional career opportunities, and job application completion).
- b. College readiness:
Provides the level of preparation needed for young people to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. Activities offered should promote college planning skills in young people, which may include awareness of and preparation for school applications, pre-requisite testing, scholarship application and financial planning, college campus culture, intellectual norms in the academic environment, decision-making and assessing risky behavior, and expectations for engagement. Other activities could include college campus visits, test preparation, discussing expectations with current college students, and scholarship search assistance.
- c. Curriculum-based life skills:
Provide youth activities that are based upon a written curriculum for individual skills development including, but not limited to, communication, self-control, anger management, problem solving, adapting to change, choosing friends wisely, healthy relationships, and independent living. Activities offered should promote healthy decision-making, goal setting, budget planning and financial literacy, healthy eating and nutrition, digital and civic literacy, healthy living and wellness, and self-advocacy.
- d. Life Skills Non-Curriculum:
Provide youth with social, personal, and vocational skills and opportunities to help them achieve economic success, avoid involvement in criminal activity, and increase social competencies, e.g., conflict resolution, anger management, healthy relationships, career exploration, and interviewing skills.

D. Family Focused Activities

Activity based, involve the child or youth and at least one other Family member, and are not part of a written curriculum or counseling.

E. Support Groups

1. Facilitated support groups for Caregivers to share and connect around military life, parenting experiences, build social connections, and engage in a community of other Military-Connected Families.

F. Service Planning and Coordination

1. Service planning and coordination by working with parents and Caregivers to identify and document Family needs and goals and arranging, connecting, and linking the delivery of services and supports. May include collaborating with other providers to ensure successful connections and coordination.
2. Service planning and coordination is an engagement that may include checking on Families, delivering Basic Needs support or family support items, coordinating support services, identifying issues, and providing other related support.
3. Service planning and coordination may also include providing individualized support or coaching to parents and Caregivers and their Family impacted by military life navigating a system or process.

G. Counseling – Family and Individual

1. FSS defines Family and Individual Counseling as a therapeutic intervention designed to promote strong families and youth resilience. The purpose of Family and Individual Counseling is to build skills, enhance Protective Factors, and promote resiliency. Family and Individual Counseling is not a substitute for individuals who need intensive or long-term counseling or psychiatric care.
2. Grantees must ensure the following:
 - a. The counselor works with the Family and/or youth to identify the presenting concern, subsequent concerns, and Family and individual strengths.
 - b. **Form G, Project Work Plan**, must include a description of what evidence-based therapeutic approaches will be implemented with SMVF Participants.
 - c. The counselor providing Family and Individual Counseling Sessions is a licensed professional.

H. Basic Needs Support

Basic Needs support is assistance to meet Basic Needs essential for family well-being, stability, and optimal care for children. Assistance could include, but is not limited to, food, housing, utility assistance, clothing, household items, diapers, and transportation. It is typically provided in conjunction with other supports and services.

1. Grantee provides Basic Needs support through Referrals and in-kind, purchased, or donated items to fill Basic Needs that are essential for a Family to function.

2. Grantee will describe policies to track and disburse Basic Needs support in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.
3. Reimbursement procedures, allowable amount per Family, and acceptable use of Basic Needs support funds will be dictated by HHSC and communicated to the Grantee after Grant Agreement execution.

I. Financial Wellness

Financial wellness and literacy programming and services that could include financial wellness and literacy workshops, individual planning and coaching, financial wellness apps, and support materials. Any financial wellness and literacy programming should have demonstrated efficacy and be relevant and suitable for the eligible population.

J. Childcare for SMVF Programming

Grantee provides supervised childcare during any SMVF programming for an enrolled Caregiver.

K. Emergency Respite Care

Emergency Respite Care is defined as short-term and temporary care that provides parents and Caregivers temporary relief, improves family stability, and reduces the risk of abuse or neglect. Respite could be planned or offered during emergencies or times of crisis, or to prevent these.

L. Other Programming

The Applicant may propose other programming not listed above by including details in **Form G, Project Work Plan**. HHSC will review and provide a decision regarding potential approval of any other proposed programming during the negotiations phase of this RFA with Grantee or simultaneous with its approval of the annual Project Work Plan. The Applicant should describe programming, the community need that the programming will remedy, and why the Applicant selected the programming. If available, Grantee's description should refer to the CSNA, see **Section 2.6.1, CSNA**.

2.5.3 Eligible Programming Delivery Methods

HHSC prefers face-to-face programming, which should encompass most program delivery methods; however, recognizing the unique need of flexibility for Military-Connected families, the Applicant may propose telephone and virtual programming alternatives to in-person service delivery. The Applicant should address the following items, at a minimum, in **Form G, Project Work Plan**:

- A. Description of the programming that will be provided through a virtual platform, and the platform(s) to be used.
- B. Description of any modifications required for delivering applicable programming via telephone or virtual platform.
- C. Description of how family preference informs the programming delivery methods.

- D. Description of intake procedures, consent and authorization, and when programming or services are delivered via telephone or virtual platforms.

2.6 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All Grant Projects funded under this RFA must meet the following program requirements:

- A. Grantees must provide programming and services as required by the Grant Agreement to the eligible population in the specified SDA:
 - 1. The number of unduplicated Families served must meet the minimum monthly and annual Outputs established in the Grant Agreement. An unduplicated enrollment requires a Primary Caregiver with a unique PEIRS Enrollment ID number, who is only counted one time per month for the monthly Output when they receive a service in that month and one time during the State Fiscal Year for the annual Output when they receive a service in the Fiscal Year.
 - 2. Grantees may only recruit and serve families that are not already receiving the same services.
 - 3. All Participants must enter the program voluntarily. “Voluntarily” means that the Participant must not be coerced, court ordered, or mandated to participate in SMVF programming.
 - 4. Grantee cannot charge Participants a fee for participating in the SMVF program or for any SMVF participation-related costs.
 - 5. Grantee must provide programming to parents and Caregivers and their children impacted by military life without regard to their economic status.
 - 6. Any community-level services, activities, and events the Grantee conducts under the Grant Agreement must be focused on and tailored for Military-Connected families.
- B. To support effective programming and services, Grantees must:
 - 1. Incorporate intentional, ongoing efforts to support and make resources available to Caregivers and families.
 - 2. Meet requirements and qualifications of any selected Program Models.
 - 3. Provide Reflective Supervision for Program Staff, especially direct service staff.
 - 4. Provide supervision that includes case discussion and review, ongoing education, and professional development.
 - 5. Assess for and ensure program quality through supervision, service documentation review, quality assurance practices, Program Model fidelity review (as applicable), and monitoring.
- C. Grantees may use the National Family Support Network’s Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support (<https://www.nationalfamilysupportnetwork.org/standards-of-quality>), or another

quality framework to assess the Applicant's organization and services for responsiveness to the needs of families and to enhance their approach and services during the Project Period.

- D. Grantees must comply with all policy updates and clarifications that HHSC issues during the Project Period.
- E. Grantees must participate in all HHSC required webinars, trainings, and conference calls.
- F. Use of Subawards
 - 1. Grantee may choose to enter into a Subaward for the provision of any direct programming described within this RFA. Sub-awardees providing programming under this RFA shall meet the same requirements and levels of experience as required of the Applicant.
 - 2. No Subaward under this RFA shall relieve the Grantee of the responsibility for ensuring that the requested programming is provided in accordance with the requirements described in any Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA.
 - 3. Applicant will include in its Application work to be performed by Sub-awardees and will include proposed Sub-awardee Budget(s).
 - 4. Grantee will award Subawards based on its own internal policies and processes. Grantee will notify HHSC in writing before executing a new agreement if the Sub-awardee changes.
 - 5. After award, Grantee and Sub-awardee must negotiate any needed changes to the Sub-awardee SDA and report requested changes to HHSC. Any proposed change from the Grantee or Sub-awardee to the direct programming provided, or any proposed change that would require a new Sub-awardee, must have prior approval from HHSC.
 - 6. If Grantee terminates any Subaward and the Grantee has not fully expended the funds obligated to the Sub-awardee during the State Fiscal Year, the Grantee must find a replacement Sub-awardee within 60 Calendar Days or obligate those funds in a manner consistent with the purposes of SMVF. Any changes resulting from such termination must be reported to and approved by HHSC prior to implementation.

2.6.1 CSNA

- A. The Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) is an assessment the Applicant develops and utilizes to identify community strengths, needs, assets, characteristics, challenges, and available resources in the proposed SDA.
- B. The Applicant must conduct a CSNA for their proposed SDA.
- C. The Applicant must use 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. The Applicant must provide a summary of the CSNA as part of **Form F, Program Narrative**.

2.6.2 Logic Model

- A. A logic model is a graphic depiction (road map) that shows the relationship between the resources, activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and impact of a program. It demonstrates the relationship between the program's activities, intended effects, and impact. A logic model shows the impact the program's efforts will have in a measurable format.
- B. As part of the Application, the Applicant must submit a logic model for its proposed programming and activities. The logic model must be submitted as an attachment to **Form F, Program Narrative**, labeled as **Attachment F-1, Logic Model**.
- C. The Applicant may use any logic model format. There are a variety of logic model formats and generally they all have the same components, which include resources, activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and impact. Suggested sources for more information in developing a logic model include, but are not limited to, the following:
 1. W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Kellogg Foundation-Logic Model Development Guide, https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Kellogg_Foundation_Logic_Model_Guide.pdf.
 2. Family Resource Information, Education, and Network Development Service, <https://friendsnrc.org/evaluation/logic-models/>.
 3. The University of Kansas, <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/models-for-community-health-and-development/logic-model-development/main>.
- D. The Applicant's logic model resources, activities, and Outputs should inform and be reflected in **Form F, Program Narrative**.

2.6.3 Organizational Qualifications and Requirements

The Applicant must describe their experience implementing and administering similar programs, including how they meet organizational qualifications in **Form F, Program Narrative**.

- A. Applicant should outline the organization's knowledge or experience implementing programs to the eligible population, such as experience in developing, managing, or overseeing family-focused, community-based, or short-term service programs relevant to programmatic requirements;
- B. Applicant should describe previous experience providing services in the proposed SDA and community partnerships;
- C. Applicant should describe the organization's experience and capacity in managing budgets, grants, or contracts and capacity to meet administrative and fiscal requirements. This could include Texas State agency or federal funding monitoring or audit reports for reviews conducted in the past three years;

- D. Applicant should have a financial manager responsible for fiscal oversight of the Grantee's organization. Applicant may decide to assign these duties to an existing role, or create a dedicated role, depending on the size and scope of the overall SMVF program; and
- E. Applicants should describe how any proposed Sub-awardees meet these organizational qualifications as well.

2.6.4 Organizational Enhancements

The Applicant must propose and describe, in **Form G, Project Work Plan**, strategies for organizational enhancements and service delivery to address the needs of Military-Connected Families in the SDA throughout the Project Period.

- A. The Applicant should consider multiple dimensions and strategies to effectively respond to the needs of Military-Connected Families such as service sites and hours, outreach materials, and relevance of service and activities, and the Applicant may propose activities that include the following:
 - 1. Developing a parent advisory committee of Military-Connected Families to partner with the organization to develop and vet improvements or engage in intentional activities to recruit from the target population into an existing one;
 - 2. Cultivating Military-Connected Families as mentors and leaders in the community;
 - 3. Engaging Military-Connected Families in outreach strategies such as word-of-mouth and culturally relevant advertising campaigns;
 - 4. Involving alumni who are Military-Connected in new program activities and across the organization; and
 - 5. Strategic hiring of Program Staff to reflect lived experienced or knowledge related to the target population.
- B. The Applicant may reference the following tools to inform the organizational enhancement strategy(ies):
 - 1. Military One Source (see <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/leaders-service-providers/>) provides information, resources, and resource Referrals on every aspect of military life, including but not limited to, deployment, reunion, relationships, grief, spouse employment and education, parenting and childhood, and more.
 - 2. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (see <https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/populations-at-risk/military-and-veteran-families/nctsn-resources>) addresses how children of military and veteran families experience unique challenges related to military life and culture. These include deployment-related stresses such as parental separation, family reunification, and reintegration; disruption of relationships with friends and neighbors due to frequent moves; and adaptation to new schools and new community resources.

3. The Texas Veterans Commission (see <https://veteransmentalhealth.texas.gov/provider-network/#training-options>) has several trainings and webinars to inform effective Service Member practices and program evaluation.
- C. In addition, the Applicant must identify a continuum of services, some within the Applicant's existing service array and others to meet the priorities of Military-Connected Families based on community needs, citing existing community needs assessments or other relevant community-specific resources. The Applicant should identify existing support services or propose other support services for the target population where appropriate.

2.6.5 Organizational Competence

- A. The Applicant must describe organizational competencies and demonstrate preparedness to implement SMVF programming in **Form F, Program Narrative**.
- B. The Applicant must address the following to show their ability to:
 1. Strategically hire and retain direct service staff and supervisor(s) to ensure successful program implementation and quality service provision;
 2. Ensure staff are competent in connecting with and serving Military-Connected Participants or other adverse experiences;
 3. Promote programming and services, utilizing outreach methods and materials in a manner that is relevant and compelling to Military-Connected families and their communities; and
 4. Reach and engage eligible families across proposed communities.
- C. Applicants should describe how any proposed Sub-awardees meet these organizational competencies as well.

2.6.6 Program Staffing Requirements

A. Staffing Plan

As part of **Form G, Project Work Plan**, the Applicant must develop, provide, and manage a staffing plan that includes processes to recruit, hire, and train qualified Program Staff to include direct service staff, supervisors, program director, administrative staff, Sub-awardee staff, and volunteers as applicable.

1. The staffing plan should ensure ability to provide quality programming and service delivery, continuity of programs in the event of a vacancy, and to meet required Performance Measures and achieve intended program impact.
2. The Applicant must provide detailed position descriptions for all positions under the grant to include:
 - a. Minimum educational and experience requirements;
 - b. Required experience and skills;
 - c. Position responsibilities;

- d. Comprehensive employee training plan; and
 - e. Succession plan for all program positions.
3. If the Grantee elects to enter a Subaward for any programming, the same minimum staffing qualifications apply to Sub-awardee staff.
4. Any changes to the staffing plan after award must have approval from FSS.

B. Program Staff Responsibilities and Requirements

The Applicant may decide to assign the responsibilities and activities, as detailed below, to an existing role or position. The Applicant must have a clear organizational structure, with program director responsibilities clearly accounted for and currently assigned to the qualified Program Staff. The Applicant must outline staff roles, responsibilities, and qualifications detailed in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.

1. Program Director

- a. The program director role, or equivalent position such as program coordinator or program manager, is the primary program contact and is responsible for oversight of all program activities and offerings and supervision.
- b. Program director experience, education, and qualifications are ultimately at the discretion of the Grantee but should be sufficient to ensure quality programming and service oversight, as well as the ability to meet program Outputs and achieve intended program impact. HHSC recommends that any person holding the program director position or performing program director responsibilities should have at least a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, with relevant work experience, and a minimum of five 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 role or must be integrated into other appropriate manager roles where qualifications are met. Clear organizational structure is required, with program director responsibilities clearly accounted for and assigned to the qualified FTE(s).
- e. The program director will:
 - i. Serve as the primary SMVF Program contact and liaison;
 - ii. Provide program oversight, to include managing operations, supporting and monitoring performance related to the Project, and planning for improvements where needed;
 - iii. Ensure program operations and activities adhere to all applicable policies, procedures, and guidelines pertaining to the Grant Agreement, organization, the selected Program Model(s), and services;

- iv. Ensure that SMVF Program goals are met, especially related to Deliverables, Performance Measures, and processes;
- v. Assist in Budget planning, ensuring the Budget aligns with program goals and operations;
- vi. Hire, train, and supervise program employees; and
- vii. Provide regular administrative, clinical, and Reflective Supervision of direct service staff.

2. Program Staff

- a. Program Staff who provide direct services conduct assessment, education, and support as they assist Caregivers and their Families in attaining identified goals. Program Staff may provide family and individual sessions, Program Model-based parenting or youth skills groups, or other approved programming.
- b. Staff experience, education, and qualifications are ultimately at the discretion of the Grantee but should be sufficient to ensure quality programming and service delivery as well as the ability to meet service Outputs and achieve intended program impact. FSS recommends that direct service Program Staff who are primarily responsible for delivering any services have an associate degree or higher in a health and human services field, along with two or more years of direct service experience in a health and human services field. A bachelor's degree is preferred, along with two or more years of direct service experience in a health and human services field. If any proposed Program Models have more stringent requirements or qualifications, Grantee must meet those requirements rather than the minimum requirements cited in this section.
- c. The Applicant may substitute experience for education on a year-for-year basis if the person holding the Program Staff position does not have an associate degree.
- d. Program staff must:
 - i. Complete all required training specified by FSS and any relevant to the selected Program Model(s);
 - ii. Adhere to standards of social work or other human services practice as well as any relevant agency or Program Model requirements, policies, procedures, and guidelines;
 - iii. Employ strengths-based methods;
 - iv. Complete required program documentation;
 - v. Report to appropriate supervisor and engage in Reflective Supervision; and
 - vi. Conduct other approved duties as determined by the Grantee.

C. Background Checks

1. Grantee must ensure completed background checks, as directed by FSS, before Program Staff can complete any of the activities below:
 - a. Having direct contact with a Participant;
 - b. Accessing PEIRS; and
 - c. Accessing Participant records.
2. Grantee must complete background checks every two years for all Program Staff members who complete any of the activities above.

D. Organizational Training Plan

1. The Applicant should submit a training plan that includes both initial and ongoing training for all Program Staff including volunteers, Sub-awardee employees, and anyone else working on the Grant Project. The Applicant should include a summary of all training elements, timeframes, number of hours, and frequency in **Form G, Project Work Plan**. Staff training must include the following competencies:
 - a. New employee orientation;
 - b. Military competency specific training;
 - c. Program Model training (if applicable);
 - d. Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support or other quality framework training (when appropriate); and
 - e. Additional training topics that may be incorporated in staff training could include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - i. Adverse childhood experiences;
 - ii. Bullying;
 - iii. Case documentation;
 - iv. Case management;
 - v. Child and youth development;
 - vi. Community collaboration and community impact;
 - vii. Crisis intervention;
 - viii. Cross-cultural training;
 - ix. Domestic Violence awareness;
 - x. Effective collaboration;
 - xi. Effective group facilitation;
 - xii. Family engagement;
 - xiii. Healthy relationships;
 - xiv. Internet safety for Families;

- xv. Mental Health First Aid Training;
 - xvi. Parent advisory groups;
 - xvii. Positive Youth Development;
 - xviii. Professional ethics;
 - xix. Protective Factors;
 - xx. Referrals and service connections;
 - xxi. Substance use;
 - xxii. Suicide prevention and postvention; or
 - xxiii. Trauma-Informed care.
2. Grantee must participate and involve appropriate staff in webinars, trainings, and conference calls, including the annual Partners in Prevention (PIP) conference, as required by HHSC.
 3. Grantee must develop and follow processes to track all required training in personnel files.
 4. Sub-awardees performing programming under this grant must meet the same training requirements as Grantee.

2.6.7 Recruitment, Outreach, and Retention

- A. The Applicant should describe policies and procedures to align service and outreach efforts in accordance with the guidance provided in this section in **Form G, Project Work Plan**
- B. In accordance with Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) federal program requirements, SMVF focuses on community-based and prevention-focused programs and activities designed to prevent child abuse and neglect. Activities, services, and outreach should focus on populations consistent with these primary and secondary prevention aims.⁹
 1. Primary prevention consists of activities that are targeted toward the community at large. These activities are meant to impact parents and Caregivers and their children impacted by military life before any allegations of abuse and neglect.
 2. Secondary prevention consists of activities targeted to parents and Caregivers and their children impacted by military life that have one or more risk factors, including families with substance abuse, teen parents, parents of special needs children, single parents, and low-income families.
- C. Outreach and service efforts must focus on Military-Connected families and their children impacted by military life who have not been recently involved with Child Protective Investigations (CPI) or Child Protective Services (CPS). In accordance with the prevention aim of these funds, HHSC intends that Participants of SMVF

⁹ For more information on CBCAP, visit the FRIENDS network website at the following URL: <https://friendsnrc.org/cbcap/what-is-cbcap/>.

programs will not have a confirmed or open CPI or CPS case. HHSC recognizes that due to the voluntary nature of services, Grantees may not be aware of Participant history. HHSC may monitor the number of Participants served under a Grantee's program that have a history of, or current involvement with, CPI or CPS.

- D. Throughout the Project Period, if FSS determines that the population served falls excessively outside of the primary and secondary prevention focus as defined in this section, FSS Program Staff will provide technical assistance regarding outreach efforts.
- E. Applicant should describe outreach and recruitment plans and strategies to connect to eligible families in **Form G, Project Work Plan**. In developing plans and strategies, the Applicant should be aware of the following:
 - 1. In addition to standard means of program outreach and marketing, such as dissemination of brochures and attending community events, using social media, and outreach to eligible individuals within the community, the Applicant should include innovative and targeted approaches in the plan as well. Innovative approaches could include, but are not limited to, use of social media, establishing relationships with pediatric and family care providers, and establishing relationships with businesses that cater to Military-Connected families.
 - 2. The Applicant should propose outreach plans for the community at large. Grantee should conduct outreach and awareness focused on primary and secondary prevention. Outreach plans should not be targeted toward agencies and organizations that already have a strong connection with CPS. For example, SMVF programs that are part of a foster care agency should not recruit Participants served through their foster care programs.
 - 3. The Applicant should describe how they will alleviate barriers to engagement and participation. Outreach and retention plans should include consideration of community context, geographic location, and other relevant factors.
 - 4. While Grantees are not permitted to conduct outreach and recruitment, regular grant programming and activities, or other grant initiatives outside the Grantee's approved Primary County(ies), Grantees may serve families residing in a county that is contiguous to an approved Primary County on a limited, individual, and as-needed basis, such as when a family relocates to a county that is contiguous to the Primary County. Grantees may not allocate resources to serve these counties and must obtain approval to serve Participants outside the approved service area.
 - 5. Grantees must add programming, including all programming provided by Sub-awardees, to the Texas 2-1-1 site as well as its 2-1-1 Area Information Center and must update its information within 30 Calendar Days of any changes to program information.
- F. Applicants should describe plans to promote participant retention in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.
 - 1. Retention plans should include plans to promote and support family engagement and participation, including increased frequency of communication with families,

use of parent support groups to foster parent connections, involving families in program planning, relational health competency development for direct service staff, etc.

2. Applicants may propose the use of incentives to support program retention and engagement. Applicant should elaborate on proposed incentives, how they were chosen, how they will be provided, and the intended impact for Participants.
 - a. Incentives should be used in the cases of milestone achievement or after successful program completion.
 - b. For information on effective incentive types and strategies, please consult the field guide and webinar slides available at the following URL:
<http://www.buildingbetterprograms.org/2016/12/14/using-incentives-in-human-services-field-guide-literature-review-and-webinar/>.
 - c. Incentives should not be used, nor appear to be used, as payment for participation; therefore, incentives cannot be excessive and cannot be provided at every session or interaction with a Participant Family.
 - d. HHSC must approve program incentives, which must, at a minimum, be reasonable and allocable.
- G. Efforts must be made by the Grantee to ensure that eligible Families are not denied or delayed services due to a waitlist. The Grantee must have Referral policies and procedures in place that provide alternative service options either through the Grantee or through other community resources when the Grantee is at capacity.

2.6.8 Service Authorization and Enrollment

- A. Grantees must have a documented process for conducting intake and completing enrollments, including how the Family's individual eligibility will be determined and forms completion.
- B. Grantee must have an enrollment process that includes completing the HHSC enrollment form or a Grantee enrollment form. The enrollment form must capture all required data, which includes a Primary Caregiver's signed consent to participate, a review of eligibility criteria, and any additional surveys and assessments required by HHSC.
- C. Grantees should complete the enrollment form in its entirety and ensure that all required data is entered in PEIRS. Primary Caregivers must sign consent to participate prior to the provision of programming.
- D. Annual Data Authorization
Grantee must complete a new data authorization form for each participating Primary Caregiver either at the beginning of each State Fiscal Year, at the beginning of the program year after services begin, or on each anniversary of Participant enrollment in the program, for as long as the Participant receives programming.

2.6.9 Service Completion

The Applicant must describe the process for service completion and discharge of SMVF Program participation in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.

- A. Grantee must document service completion through the Participant discharge form and in PEIRS when services are completed.
- B. Grantees must have a service completion process that includes collecting any required surveys from Participants and documenting any additional Referrals.
- C. If Participant(s) and Index Child or Index Youth have not received a service in 90 Calendar Days, Grantee must complete the discharge process.
- D. If Participant(s) and Index Child or Index Youth return within the next 30 Calendar Days 120 total Calendar Days since their last service), the “Undo Discharge” function should be used to reactivate the registration in PEIRS rather than reenrolling the Participant and Index Child or Index Youth.
- E. For all former Participants whose PEIRS enrollment has been closed for more than 120 Calendar Days, Program Staff should review their enrollment form to ensure that information is still current. If any information is outdated, Program Staff must open a new enrollment and complete any paperwork required by FSS or Grantee.
- F. Grantees must enter any Referrals made for additional services to other local social service providers in PEIRS. Grantees must have a documented process for service completion and corresponding forms completion.

2.6.10 Program Surveys

The Applicant must describe plans for the administration of the following surveys in **Form G, Project Work Plan**:

- A. Protective Factors Survey
 - 1. Prior to service delivery, Grantee must provide a pre-service Protective Factors survey (PFS) to the Primary Caregiver. Grantee may provide this survey to any secondary Caregivers who are participating in program services. The survey should be administered during the intake and assessment session. Grantee must enter the survey data into PEIRS within the required data entry time frame.
 - 2. Grantee must administer a post-service PFS to Primary Caregivers at the end of program participation. Grantee must make concerted effort to have the Caregiver complete this survey and document any efforts to administer the survey in the Participant Case Record. Grantee may also administer the post-service PFS to any secondary Caregivers who are participating in programming. Grantee must enter the survey data into PEIRS within the required data entry time frame.
 - 3. The pre-service PFS and post-service PFS must be completed by the same Caregiver.
 - 4. The Grantee must maintain the pre-service PFS and post-service PFS in the Participant Case Record.

B. Program Experience Survey

Grantee must complete the Program Experience Survey (PES) with the Primary Caregiver when exiting the program, including those Participants who have completed the program and those who are exiting early.

2.6.11 Required Record Keeping

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

- A. Grantee must track all SMVF activities and initiatives provided in accordance with the Grantee's approved **Form G, Project Work Plan**.
- B. Grantee must ensure that all program documentation is complete, accurate, and maintained in an organized fashion.
- C. Grantee must maintain records in a manner that protects the Confidential Information of all members of the Participant's Family.
- D. Grantee must maintain individual Participant Records that include the following:
 - 1. Enrollment form;
 - 2. Annual Data Authorization form;
 - 3. Required assessments and surveys;
 - 4. Service activity documentation, such as sign-in sheets or service activity notes;
 - 5. Basic Needs assistance documentation;
 - 6. Outgoing service Referrals;
 - 7. Discharge form; and
 - 8. Other entity documentation or documentation required by Program Model (if applicable).
- E. Grantee must develop and maintain a Referral tracking system to record Participants referred to the Grantee for program services and track when services are not provided or that a Participant does not engage in program or was determined to be ineligible to include:
 - 1. Date of Referral;
 - 2. Origin of the Referral;
 - 3. Participant eligibility for services; and
 - 4. Date Participant began program.
- F. Grantee must ensure compliance with all recordkeeping requirements in this RFA.
- G. Grantee must maintain electronic and/or physical records related to Grant programming, activities, and operations.

H. Grantee must make all SMVF records available and accessible to HHSC upon request.

2.6.12 Community and Systems Support Requirements

The Applicant must describe plans for community and systems-level engagement in **Form G, Project Work Plan**. The following should be considered:

- A. Military-Connected families benefit from an organized system of community resources to support family strengthening and well-being. An organized system can help families and their children connect to and access information, resources, and supports.
- B. Community coalitions can support community coordination of parent and Caregiver support, quality positive parenting strategies and programming, promoting family well-being, and healthy child and youth development. Through assessment, planning, and coordination, community coalitions can promote improved community conditions, services, and outcomes for Military-Connected families and their communities. Community coalitions could be a community-based collaborative, local or regional coalition, committee, or community group.
 - 1. Grantee must engage with a coalition of community organizations, partners, businesses, area residents, parents, and stakeholders, who share a common goal of supporting Military-Connected families, preventing child abuse and neglect, or any related area. Coalitions may be population- or issue-focused or have a subcommittee or task force to promote awareness and address goals.
 - 2. Where possible, Grantees should engage with an existing coalition to leverage infrastructure and partnerships to promote and meet community coalition goals.
 - 3. Examples of coalition activities may include:
 - a. Improving coordination of existing services and resources and advocating for additional services or resources to improve systems and outcomes for Military-Connected families.
 - b. Engaging the Participant population in service planning or community development efforts.
 - c. Developing a subcommittee to assess and improve service delivery for Military-Connected Families in the community.
 - 4. A community coalition that is an appropriate fit for a Grantee under this RFA should include the following:
 - a. Encourage collaboration among area agencies and stakeholders to address a range of the needs of Military-Connected families; and
 - b. Identify and work to address barriers to service delivery and promote access to resources and supports.
 - 5. Grantee will document coalition meetings in the “Events” section of PEIRS and in the quarterly report.

- 6. The Applicant may propose more than one community coalition to meet the needs of their SDA.
- C. Grantees must partner and collaborate with other FSS Grantees within Service Delivery Area, to ensure optimal coordination of services for families and to achieve greater impact of grant investments in the community.
 - 1. Applicants should outline any plans for connecting to and collaborating other FSS Grantees within the proposed the SDA in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.
 - 2. To learn more about current FSS Grantees in the Applicant’s community, visit the following URL: <https://fss.hhs.texas.gov/default.asp>
- D. Grantees will document coalition efforts and impact and community partnerships through quarterly reporting and PEIRS data entry.

2.7 REQUIRED REPORTS

The System Agency 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 because of this RFA. Each Grantee awarded a Grant Agreement because of this RFA must submit the following reports by the noted due dates.

2.7.1 Quarterly Reports

Grantee must submit reports to FSS for each State fiscal quarter regarding implementation efforts, achievements, challenges, and other issues relevant to performance. FSS Program Staff will provide a quarterly report template to Grantees. The following table provides due dates for all quarterly reports. If the due date falls on a weekend or holiday, the quarterly report is due the first Business Day following the weekend or holiday.

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

2.7.2 Invoices/Requests for Reimbursement – Monthly

- A. FSS will provide required forms after grant award.
- B. Grantee will submit an Invoice and purchase voucher through PEIRS monthly to request reimbursement from FSS.
- C. Grantee will submit the Invoice and purchase voucher through PEIRS no later than the last day of the month following that in which the expenditures occurred. If the last day of the month falls on a weekend or holiday, the Invoice and purchase voucher are due the next Business Day.

- D. Upon receipt of a proper and verified Invoice, and after deduction of any known previous overpayment made by HHSC, HHSC will pay Grantee from available funds for programming rendered in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement.
- E. Grantee must create and maintain reliable and accurate records to support all actions related to invoicing, payments, and adjustments for programming provided to SMVF Participants. Records must include the following:
 - 1. Signed purchase vouchers;
 - 2. Expenditure reports, monthly mileage log, monthly Participant activity log, incentives log; and
 - 3. Any other supporting documentation required by HHSC.

2.7.3 PEIRS Data Entry

- A. Grantees are required to enter data pertaining to Participant enrollments, service activities, and program events and activities in PEIRS. Required PEIRS data entry includes the following:
 - 1. Participant enrollment information;
 - 2. Index Child or Index Youth enrollment information;
 - 3. Service data;
 - 4. Participant discharge information;
 - 5. Survey data; and
 - 6. Program events and activities data.
- B. Grantee must ensure accurate and complete data entry for a specific month into PEIRS no later than 30 Calendar Days following the close of the month in which an enrollment occurred, programming was provided, an event was held, or a Participant and/or Family was discharged.
- C. Grantee must use a secure internet connection to complete PEIRS data entry and ensure that the computer Equipment used for data entry meets minimum requirements established by FSS for efficient connection to PEIRS. At the time of this RFA, the minimum requirements are Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome 99 or higher.
- D. To have access to PEIRS, Program Staff must:
 - 1. Have cleared a background check;
 - 2. Complete PEIRS training (see <https://learningportal.hhs.texas.gov/>); and
 - 3. Annually complete HHSC's cybersecurity training, a version of which is located at the following URL:
<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/contracting/hhs-information-security-cybersecurity-training-for-contractors.pdf>.

2.7.4 Compliance With Reporting Requirements

Grantee shall provide all applicable reports in the format specified by System Agency 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 System Agency, 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

The System Agency will look solely to Grantee for the performance of all Grantee obligations and requirements in a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA. Grantee shall not be relieved of its obligations for any nonperformance by its Subgrantees or Subcontractors, if any.

Grant Agreement(s) awarded because of this RFA are subject to the System Agency's performance monitoring activities throughout the duration of the Grant Term. 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 the resulting Grant Agreement, or as otherwise specified by System Agency. Grantees must submit the necessary information and documentation regarding all requirements, including reports and other Deliverables, and will be expected to report on the following measures:

- A. FSS requires Outputs and Outcomes for each Grant Agreement awarded as a result of this RFA.
- B. Grantee reports on Outputs and Outcomes in the quarterly reports as detailed in **Section 2.7, Required Reports**.
- C. Performance Measures incorporated into all SMVF grants include, but are not limited to, those included in **Table 2: Grantee Target Outputs and Outcomes** below:

Table 2: Grantee Target Outputs and Outcomes	
Outputs and Outcomes Defined	Required Target Output and Outcome
Output 1: Expected number of Families served monthly.	The Applicant will propose the number of Families served monthly.*
Output 2: Expected number of Families served annually.	The Applicant will propose the number of Families served annually.*
Output 3: Primary Caregivers that will complete both pre-service and post-service Protective Factors Surveys.	60%

Output 4: Primary Caregivers that will complete the Program Experience Survey at discharge.	50%
Outcome 1: Index Children or Index Youth that will remain Safe while receiving programming.	100%
Outcome 2: Primary Caregivers who complete the pre-service and post-service Protective Factors Surveys that will show an average increase in the score for at least one Protective Factor.	75%
Outcome 3: Primary Caregivers will report positive (agree/strongly agree) outcomes in at least one domain of the Program Experience Survey at discharge.	80%

* Outputs are subject to negotiation and final determination based on available funds and FSS requirements.

- D. The Applicant will propose the following target Outputs and Outcomes listed above in **Table 2: Grantee Target Outputs and Outcomes**, at the time of Application submission in **Form G, Project Work Plan**:
1. Total number of Families served monthly; and
 2. Target number of Families served annually.
- E. FSS will negotiate these target Outputs and Outcomes with the Applicant prior to award of a Grant Agreement based on available funds and FSS requirements.
- F. Grantee will report to FSS on required Outputs and Outcomes through PEIRS, along with any additional reports that may be developed, implemented, and maintained by FSS because of State or federal requirements instituted subsequent to execution of any Grant Agreement awarded as a result of the RFA.
- G. In addition to the Outputs and Outcomes listed in **Table 2: Grantee Target Outputs and Outcomes**, FSS will track the Grantee’s progress toward:
1. Index Children and Index Youth remaining Safe 12 months after enrollment discharge; and
 2. Index Children and Index Youth remaining Safe three years after enrollment discharge.

If requested by System Agency, Grantee shall report on the progress towards completion of the Grant Project and other relevant information as determined by System Agency 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.

2.9 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Grantee must have a financial management system in place to maintain internal controls, ensure proper management of federal and State funds, maximize non-federal resources, and maintain solvency. Grantee's accounting and internal controls systems must meet the following requirements:

- A. The systems must be appropriate to the size of the organization.
- B. The accounting system must consist of source documents, a chart of accounts, journals, ledgers, and routine financial reports.
- C. The accounting system must be capable of producing expenditure reports, cost center analyses, Budget formats, and automated reports as required by, and without additional support from, HHSC.
- D. The systems must include records that adequately identify the source and application of funds for federally funded activities. These records must contain information on federal awards, authorizations, financial obligations, unobligated balances, assets, expenditures, income and interest, and be supported by source documentation.
- E. The systems must demonstrate Grantee's effective control over, and accountability for, all funds, property, and other assets. The systems must ensure all funds and assets are adequately safeguarded and are solely used for authorized purposes.
- F. The internal controls system must safeguard the Grantee's assets, produce accurate accounting data, promote efficient operations, and ensure adherence to prescribed accounting policies and procedures.
- G. Effective internal controls must involve a division of responsibility among different employees for a sequence of related functions, clear establishment of each employee's responsibilities and duties, and use of standards such as procurement policies, proofs, checks, and other security measures.
- H. The systems must meet the minimum standards for financial management systems under 7 CFR § 277.6, Standards for Financial Management Systems, and under 2 CFR § 200.302, Financial Management.
- I. Grantee must use the accrual basis accounting method for all financial Deliverables. This includes, but is not limited to, Invoices or any other financial documents or reports as requested by HHSC. This requirement does not constitute a change to the agency's financial management system. Refer to 45 CFR § 75.302, Financial Management and Standards for Financial Management Systems.

2.10 FINAL BILLING SUBMISSION

Unless otherwise directed by the System Agency, 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.

2.11 DATA USE AGREEMENT

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

2.12 LIMITATIONS ON GRANTS TO UNITS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Pursuant to the General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Section 4.04,

(a) In each Grant Agreement with a unit of local government, grant funds appropriated under the General Appropriations Act will be expended subject to limitations and reporting requirements like those provided by:

- (1) Parts 2, 3, and 5 of Article IX of the General Appropriations Act (except there is no requirement for increased salaries for local government employees);
- (2) §§556.004, 556.005, and 556.006, Government Code; and
- (3) §§2113.012 and 2113.101, Government Code.

(b) In this section, "unit of local government" means:

- (1) a council of governments, a regional planning commission, or a similar regional planning agency created under Chapter 391, Local Government Code;
- (2) a local workforce development board; or
- (3) a community center as defined by Health and Safety Code, §534.001(b).

Section III. Applicant Eligibility Requirements

3.1 LEGAL AUTHORITY TO APPLY

By submitting an Application in response to this RFA, the 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, the Applicant certifies it will continue to maintain any required legal authority and eligibility throughout the entire duration of the Grant Term, if awarded. All requirements apply with equal force to the Applicant and, if the recipient of an award, Grantee and its Subgrantees or Subcontractors, if any.

Each Applicant may only submit one Application per SDA.

3.2 APPLICATION SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

To be considered an Applicant eligible for evaluations, the Applicant must meet the following minimum requirements:

- A. The Applicant must be a nonprofit entity as described by Chapter 22 of the Texas Business Organization Code or be a governmental entity.
- B. The Applicant must submit a complete Application by the date identified as the “Application Submission Deadline,” established at **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**.

3.3 GRANT AWARD ELIGIBILITY

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

- A. The 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. The 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. The 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. The Applicant is currently in good standing with all licensing, permitting, or regulatory bodies that regulate any or all aspects of the Applicant’s operations; and
- E. The Applicant is not delinquent in taxes owed to any taxing authority of the State of Texas as of the Effective Date of the 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, the Applicant certifies that it is not ineligible for a Grant Agreement pursuant to this prohibition.

Section IV. Project Period

4.1 PROJECT PERIOD

The Project Period is anticipated to be **September 1, 2025**, through **August 31, 2030**.

Extension of Project Period: The System Agency may, at its sole discretion, extend the Project Period for up to one year to allow for the full expenditure of awarded funding and completion of Grant activities. The Grant Term may not exceed six years.

4.2 PROJECT CLOSEOUT

System Agency will programmatically and financially close the grant award and end the Grant Agreement when System Agency 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 Term and not expended by the Project close-out date will revert to System Agency.

Transition Plan: At the end of the Grant Term, or upon termination or cancellation of a Grant Agreement, Grantee will work in coordination with HHSC to transition programming, data, and Participant Case Records to a new Grantee, if applicable.

Section V. Grant Funding and Reimbursement Information

5.1 GRANT FUNDING SOURCE AND AVAILABLE FUNDING

The total amount of federal and State funding available for the SMVF grant program is up to **\$13,921,875.00** for the entire Project Period. It is the System Agency's intention to make multiple awards to Applicants that successfully demonstrate the ability to increase availability and accessibility of services and resources to Military-Connected Families in the State of Texas.

HHSC estimates the total amount of funding for the SMVF Program is \$1,856,250.00 per State Fiscal Year. Annual awards per individual Grant Agreement typically range between \$200,000.00 and \$350,000.00. HHSC estimates the value of the RFA based on the stated annual amount multiplied by five years, plus an additional 50% to allow for increases in funding during the Project Period.

Applicants are strongly cautioned to only apply for grant funding they can responsibly expend during the Grant Term to avoid lapsed funding at the end of the Grant Term. Successful Applications may not be funded to the full extent of Applicants' 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. Spending or costs incurred prior to the Effective Date of the Grant Agreement will be allowed to the extent that the costs would have been allowable if incurred after the date of award and only with the written approval of the System Agency through a Pre-Agreement Cost Letter.

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. Vehicles for general agency use; to be allowable, vehicles must have a specific use related to Project objectives or activities;
- F. 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;
- G. Costs of promotional items and memorabilia, including models, gifts, and souvenirs;
- H. 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;
- I. Membership dues for individuals in any civic or community organization, except when preapproved by HHSC, required for program implementation, and in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.454;
- J. Any expense or service that is readily available at no cost to the Grant Project;
- K. Any activities related to fundraising;
- L. Any allocation of grant funds to individuals that do not meet the requirements outlined in **Section 2.3, Eligible Populations**;
- M. 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 2 CFR 200.439;
- N. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, State, or local law; and
- O. Other unallowable costs as listed under TxGMS, Appendix 7, Selected Items of Cost Supplement Chart and/or 2 CFR 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles, General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost, where applicable.

5.4 COST SHARING

Cost Sharing is defined as the non-federal and/or non-State share of costs the Grantee contributes to accomplish the purpose of the Grant Project. Cost Sharing must be treated consistently with grant funds and used only for allowable and allocable purposes.

HHSC does not require Cost Sharing for this grant; however, awards may not cover the entire cost of the Grant Project. Requests for funding may not be fully met to ensure that funds are available for the broadest array of communities and programs. Awarded funding for the Project Period may be fixed and may not cover increasing or unexpected costs.

All Cost Sharing funds and contributions must meet all the following criteria:

- A. Are verifiable from the Grantee's records;
- B. Are not included as contributions for any other State or federal award;
- C. Are necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of Grant Project objectives;
- D. Are allowable under the Grant Agreement;
- E. Are not paid by the State or federal government; and
- F. Are provided for in the approved Grant Project Budget.

Donations: The value of donated services may be used to meet Cost Sharing requirements. If a third party donates supplies, the contribution will be valued at the market value of the supplies at the time of donation. If a third party donates the use of Equipment or space in a building, but retains title, the contribution will be valued at the fair rental rate of the Equipment or space. If a third party donates Equipment, building, or land, and title passes to Grantee, the treatment of the donated property will be determined based on TxGMS, Cost Sharing or Matching Section.

Applicant may provide Cost Sharing funds through local philanthropic, private, city, or county funds, or through pooled funds from partner organizations committed specifically to the SMVF Program. Applicant may not use State or federal funds as Cost Sharing funds. Applicant should calculate the value of donated materials, professional services, and volunteer time in accordance with TxGMS (for more details see <https://comptroller.texas.gov/purchasing/grant-management/>).

Applicants should reflect any Cost Sharing, including in-kind or cash investments, in **Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template**.

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 Direct 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 monthly and supported by adequate documentation. No additional payments will be rendered unless an advanced payment is approved.

Upon execution of a Grant Agreement(s), if any, resulting from this RFA, the System Agency may disperse to Grantee(s) a one-time initial advance payment of no more than 10% of the funding awarded for eligible start-up costs.

5.6 NOTICE TO PROCEED

The State Fiscal Year funding amounts are subject to increase or decrease as funds are appropriated throughout the Grant term from the federal government, Texas Legislature, or both. HHSC Contract Representative will issue a written Notice to Proceed (NTP) annually to Grantee on or around July 1 containing the award amount for the upcoming State Fiscal Year (September 1–August 31). HHSC reserves the right to modify the annual award amount at any time during the Grant Term by issuing a written revised NTP to the Grantee. No expenses may be incurred and no work may begin until HHSC issues an NTP to the Grantee. HHSC may send the NTP to the Grantee by regular mail, electronic mail, or facsimile transmission. Grantee will be notified of a change to the availability of funds through the NTP.

Although the NTP may issue a budget amount less than the total not-to-exceed amount of the Grant Agreement, the NTP must not effectuate a total budget of the Grant Agreement that results in a total not-to-exceed Grant Agreement amount that exceeds the amount specified in the budget section of the Grant Agreement. Such changes to the total not-to-exceed amount specified in the Grant Agreement must be effectuated by amendment. Any expenditures made beyond the dollar amounts specified in the NTP(s) will be at Grantee's sole risk.

Section VI. Application Forms and Exhibits for Submission

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

6.1 NARRATIVE PROPOSAL

Using the specific Forms and Attachments listed below, Applicants shall provide an executive summary, a program narrative, and a Project Work Plan that describes their proposed activities, processes, and methodologies to satisfy all objectives described in **Section II, Scope of Grant Project**, including:

- A. **Form E, Executive Summary**
- B. **Form F, Program Narrative**
 - 1. **Attachment F-1, Logic Model** (Applicant provides)
 - 2. **Attachment F-2, Letters of Support** (optional)
- C. **Form G, Project Work Plan**

For the attachments listed above that state “(Applicant provides),” a template is not attached to this RFA nor being provided by HHSC. Applicant is responsible for labeling the requested information with the attachment title.

6.1.1 Executive Summary

Applicant must use **Form E, Executive Summary**, to provide a high-level overview with a broad understanding of the Applicant’s approach to meeting the RFA’s requirements. The summary must demonstrate an understanding of the goals and objectives for this grant opportunity. The page limit is one page.

6.1.2 Program Narrative

Applicant must use **Form F, Program Narrative**, to describe its background and experience. The Program Narrative must not exceed 10 pages (excluding attachments). Applicant may attach letter(s) of support to **Form F, Program Narrative**, and label as **Attachment F-2, Letters of Support**.

6.1.3 Project Work Plan

Applicant must use **Form G, Project Work Plan**, to identify all proposed tasks to be performed, including all Project activities, during the grant Project Period. Applicants must complete and submit all required attachments.

6.2 REQUESTED BUDGET

Attached **Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template**, 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 that, 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 Part 200.403 or TxGMS Cost Principles, Basic Considerations (pgs. 31-32), for additional information related to factors affecting allowability of costs.

Applicants must utilize the budget template provided, **Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template**, and identify all budget line items and Cost Sharing funds. Budget categories must be broken out into specific budget line items that allow System Agency 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. Cost Sharing funds must also be identified in the Requested Budget, if applicable.

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

Submission of Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template, is mandatory. Applicants that fail to submit Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template, 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 D, HHS System Indirect Cost Rate Questionnaire**, with required supporting documentation. The questionnaire initiates the acknowledgment or approval of an ICR for use with the System Agency cost-reimbursable contracts. Entities declining the use of Indirect Cost cannot recover Indirect Costs on any System Agency award or use unrecovered Indirect Costs as Cost Sharing.

HHS typically accepts the following approved ICRs:

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

The System Agency, 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 15% 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 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 – Fifteen Percent De Minimis, or the ICR Agreement Letter.

If an Indirect Cost Rate Letter is required but 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 A through D**, attached to this RFA, Applicant must provide satisfactory evidence of its ability as an organization to manage and coordinate the types of activities within the Scope of the Grant Project.

A. Litigation and Contract History

Applicant must include 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 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 HHS Solicitation Affirmations). 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. Financial Management and Administrative Questionnaire

Applicant must complete **Form C, Financial Management and Administrative Questionnaire**, and submit it with its Application.

Section VII. RFA Administrative Information and Inquiries

7.1 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT	DATE/TIME
Funding Announcement Posting Date Posted to HHS Grants Website	December 16, 2024
Applicant Conference Attendance is Optional	January 10, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification	January 16, 2025, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time
Tentative Date Answers to Questions or Requests for Clarification Posted	January 23, 2025, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time
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.	February 13, 2025, by 10:30 a.m. Central Time
Anticipated Notice of Award	August 1, 2025
Anticipated Project Start Date	September 1, 2025

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 [web page](#). 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	Dedra Williams
Title	Grant Specialist, HHSC Procurement and Contracting Services
Address	Procurement and Contracting Services Building 1100 W 49th St. MC: 2020 Austin, TX 78756
Phone	512-406-2412
Email	dedra.williams@hhs.texas.gov

Applicants shall not use this email address for submission of an Application. Applicants must follow the instructions for submission as outlined in Section 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 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, and Section Heading being questioned; and
- G. Question.

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

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

Questions or other written requests for clarification must be received by the Sole Point of Contact by the deadline 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.

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. 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. Waives 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 deadline for submission of Applications. 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 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 System Agency.

7.8 APPLICANT CONFERENCE

HHSC will conduct an Applicant conference on the date and time set out in **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, to review the key elements of this RFA. Attendance is optional and not required, however, attendance is strongly encouraged.

People with disabilities who wish to attend the meeting and require auxiliary aids or services should contact the Sole Point of Contact identified in **Section 7.2, Sole Point of Contact**, at least 72 hours before the meeting in order to have reasonable accommodations made by HHSC.

The conference may be held by webinar, conference call, or both. Attendees are required to sign a conference attendance log and those joining via conference call are required to send an email to the Sole Point of Contact (see **Section 7.2, Sole Point of Contact**) advising of participation in the conference. Whether signing the conference attendance log in person or sending email notification, each attendee must provide their name, attendee's company name, and attendee email address.

All questions and requests for clarification must be presented in writing at the conference. Reference **Section 7.3, RFA Questions and Requests for Clarification**, for the required format and information to be included.

During the conference, HHSC may provide responses; however, HHSC will consolidate the official responses to all questions and requests for clarifications received during the conference and include in an Addendum posted on the HHS Grants RFA website.

HHSC reserves the right to amend responses to questions and requests for clarifications after posting 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.

WEBINAR INFORMATION:

The conference will be held through GoToWebinar, which may be accessed at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6870749649082998871>.

Webinar Instructions:

- A. Enter Webinar ID: 394-629-059
- B. Enter Attendee's business email
- C. To register, the Participants must have the following information ready:
 1. First and last name of each attendee/registrant
 2. Email address for the attendee/registrant

3. Applicant's legal name
4. Job title of attendee/registrant

Section 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) because 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 to bind 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 **Section 7.1, Schedule of Events**, or subsequent Addenda, using an approved method identified below. Applications submitted by any other method (e.g., facsimile) will not be considered and will be disqualified.

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 Instructions. File Size Limitation:** Restriction to 250MB per file attachment.

- A. One copy of each document outlined in **Section XIII, Submission Checklist**, as Portable Document Format (".pdf") files with the exception of **Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template**.
- B. One copy of the completed **Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template**, in its original Excel format.

- C. One copy of the complete Application marked as “Public Information Act Copy,” if applicable, in accordance with **Section 12.1, Texas Public Information Act**, as a Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) file.

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

- A. One USB drive with each document outlined in **Section XIII, Submission Checklist**, as Portable Document Format (“.pdf”) files with the exception of **Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template**. 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 **Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template**, in its original Excel format.
- B. One 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.”

Sealed packaged must be clearly labeled with the following:

- A. RFA Number
- B. RFA Title
- C. Application Submission Deadline
- D. Sole Point of Contact’s name
- E. 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 U.S. Postal Service, overnight or express mail, or hand delivery to the addresses below. No HHS agency will be responsible or liable for any damage.

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

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 12 pt., with one-inch margins and 1.5 line spacing; the sole 12-point font size exception is no less than size 10 pt. for tables, graphs, and appendices;
- D. Include page numbering for each section of the proposal; 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 complete Application file .pdf must:

- A. Be organized in the order outlined in the **Section XIII, Submission Checklist**, and include all required sections (e.g., "Administrative Information," "Narrative Proposal," "Exhibits to be Submitted with Application," and "Addenda").
 - 1. **Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template**, 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 one of the approved methods 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.

Section 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. 2.6**, or **Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template**).

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 email 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 not being considered for award.

9.3 QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION FOR APPLICATIONS

System Agency 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. System Agency 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 H, SMVF Evaluation Criteria**.

Scoring Criteria: Qualified Applications shall be evaluated based upon:

- A. Applicant's Experience (30%);
- B. Community Engagement (30%); and
- C. Project Design (40%).

9.5 PAST PERFORMANCE

System Agency reserves the right to request additional information and conduct investigations as necessary to evaluate any Application. By applying, the Applicant generally releases from liability and waives all claims against any party providing information about the Applicant at the request of System Agency.

System Agency 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.

System Agency, at its sole discretion, may also initiate investigations or examinations of Applicant's performance based upon media reports. Any negative findings, as determined by System Agency in its sole discretion, may result in System Agency 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; and
- F. Non-renewals of grants or contracts based on Applicant's unsatisfactory performance.

Applicants also may be rejected because of unsatisfactory past performance under any grant(s) or contract(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/>, OR,
- B. Applicant is currently under a corrective action plan through HHSC or DSHS, OR,
- C. Applicant has had repeated, negative vendor performance reports for the same reason, OR,
- D. Applicant has a record of repeated non-responsiveness to vendor performance issues, OR,
- E. Applicant has contracts or purchase orders that have been cancelled in the previous 12 months for non-performance or substandard performance, OR
- F. Any other performance issue that demonstrates that awarding a Grant Agreement to Applicant would not be in the best interest of the State.

9.6 COMPLIANCE FOR PARTICIPATION IN STATE CONTRACTS

Prior to award of a Grant Agreement because 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) provided by Applicant will be used to conduct these checks. At System Agency'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://sam.gov/content/exclusions/federal>

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.state.tx.us/oigportal2/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.

Section 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 System Agency 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 System Agency may consult with internal and external subject matter experts.

The System Agency will make final awards based on evaluation scores, geographic distribution across the State, Applicant past performance (if applicable), existing infrastructure, State priorities, and availability of funding. HHSC may not fully fund requests to ensure that funds are available for the broadest array of communities and programs. HHSC may not fully fund Budget requests to ensure that funds are available for the broadest array of communities and programs.

All funding recommendations will be considered for approval by the HHSC Program Deputy Executive Commissioner, or their designee.

10.2 NEGOTIATIONS

After selecting Applicants for award, the System Agency may engage in negotiations with selected Applicants. As determined by System Agency, 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 System Agency, 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 System Agency 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 contract 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 contract 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 System Agency at the time the business entity submits the signed contract.

Applicant represents and warrants that, if selected for award of a Grant Agreement as a result of this RFA, Applicant will submit to the System Agency 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/filinginfo/1295/>.

Additional instructions and information to be used to process the Form 1295 will be provided by the System Agency to the potential Grantee(s). Grantee may contact the Sole Point of Contact or designated 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 System Agency with the signed Grant Agreement, the System Agency is prohibited by law from executing a contract, even if the potential Grantee is otherwise eligible for award. The System Agency, 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 System Agency 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, System Agency 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 the System Agency.

HHSC may announce tentative funding awards through an “Intent to Award Letter” once the HHSC Program 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) because of this RFA, HHSC will post a notification of all grants awarded to the [HHS Grants RFA](#) website.

Section XI. General Terms and Conditions

11.1 GRANT APPLICATION DISCLOSURE

In an effort to maximize State resources and reduce duplication of effort, the System Agency, at its discretion, may require the Applicant to disclose information regarding the Application for 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 to increase availability and accessibility of services and resources to Military-Connected Families in the State of Texas.

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 2 CFR 200.321. If there are no such requirements, System Agency 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/>.

Section 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 System Agency to post grants and Applications on its public website and to provide such information to the Legislative Budget Board for posting on its public website.

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

A. Mark Original Application:

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

B. Certify in Original Application – HHS Solicitation: Certify, in the designated section of the **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations**, 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, and submit the Public Information Act Copy, the Application will be considered to be public information that may be released to the public in any manner including, but not limited to, in accordance with the Public Information Act, posted on the System Agency’s public website, and posted on the Legislative Budget Board’s public website.

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

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

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

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

For more information concerning the types of information that may be withheld under the PIA or questions about the PIA, please refer to the Public Information Act Handbook published by the Office of the Texas Attorney General or contact the attorney general’s Open Government Hotline at (512) 478-OPEN (6736) or toll-free at (877) 673-6839

(877-OPEN TEX). To access the Public Information Act Handbook, please visit the attorney general's website at <http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov>.

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.

Section 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 and/or Addenda 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 (completed and signed), and Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template (completed), will be disqualified. See Section 9.2, Initial Compliance Screening of Applications, for further detail.

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

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

A. Administrative Information

1. Form A, Face Page – Applicant Information (Template provided) _____
2. Form B, Administrative Information (Template provided) _____
3. Form B-1, Governmental Entity – Authorized Officials (If applicable) (Template provided) _____
4. Form B-2, Non-Governmental Entity – Board of Directors and Principal Officers (If applicable) (Template provided) _____
5. Form C, Financial Management and Administrative Questionnaire (Template provided) _____
6. Form D, HHS System Indirect Cost Rate Questionnaire (Template provided) _____

B. Narrative Proposal

1. Form E, Executive Summary (Template provided) _____
2. Form F, Program Narrative (Template provided) _____
 - a. Attachment F-1, Logic Model (Applicant provides) _____
 - b. Attachment F-2 Letters of Support (optional) (Applicant provides) _____
3. Form G, Project Work Plan (Template provided) _____

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

- 1. Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations v. 2.6 _____

Per Section 3.2, Application Screening Requirements, Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, is mandatory and must be completed, signed, and submitted for the Application to be considered Responsive. Applications received without Exhibit A or with an unsigned Exhibit A will be disqualified.

- 2. Exhibit E-2, Texas HHS System – Data Use Agreement – Attachment 2, Security and Privacy Inquiry (SPI) _____

- 3. Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template (Excel) _____

This Requested Budget Template 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 Requested Budget Template will be disqualified.

- 4. Exhibit I, Exceptions Form (If applicable) _____

- 5. Exhibit J, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs v. 1.1 _____

- 6. Exhibit K, Certification Regarding Lobbying _____

- 7. Exhibit L, Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Certification Form _____

D. Addenda: Each Addendum, if any, must be signed and submitted with the Application.

Section XIV. List of Exhibits and Forms Attached to RFA

Exhibits

Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations, v. 2.6

Exhibit B, HHS Uniform Terms and Conditions – Grant, Version 3.5

Exhibit C, SMVF Curricula

Exhibit D, SMVF Statement of Work Template

Exhibit E, HHS Data Use Agreement, Version 8.5

Exhibit E-1, HHS Data Use Agreement - Governmental Entity, Version 8.5

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

Exhibit F, Requested Budget Template

Exhibit G, Online Bid Room Instructions

Exhibit H, SMVF Evaluation Criteria

Exhibit I, Exceptions Form (if applicable)

Exhibit J, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs v. 1.1

Exhibit K, Certification Regarding Lobbying

Exhibit L, Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Certification Form

Forms

Form A, Face Page – Applicant Information (Template provided)

Form B, Administrative Information (Template provided)

Form B-1, Governmental Entity – Authorized Officials (Template provided)

Form B-2, Non-Governmental Entity – Board of Director and Principal Officers (Template provided)

Form C, Financial Management and Administrative Questionnaire (Template provided)

Form D, HHS System Indirect Cost Rate Questionnaire (Template provided)

Form E, Executive Summary (Template provided)

Form F, Program Narrative (Template provided)

Form G, Project Work Plan (Template provided)