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# Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) Program Applicant Conference

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**Request for Applications No. HHS0015358**  
**January 8, 2025, at 10:30 AM CT**

# Agenda



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1. Introductions
2. Procurement Activities
3. Project Period
4. Grant Funding Source and Available Funding
5. Project Overview and Scope
6. Program Requirements and Allowable Activities
7. Grant Funding Prohibitions
8. Closing Comments

# Introductions

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## Speakers

**John Norton**, Grants Specialist

Sole Point of Contact for RFA

Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS) at Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

**Jody Snee**, Division Administrator for Early Childhood Programs, Family Support Services (FSS) at Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)



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# Procurement Roles

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## The RFA Team

Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS) is responsible for all procurement and solicitation activities.

Family Support Services (FSS) is responsible for grant management activities throughout the life of the Grant Agreements including, Agreement development, execution, and monitoring.

FSS is also responsible for project scope, requirements, performance, results, and monitoring.



# Schedule of Events

## Deadline for Submitting Questions or Requests for Clarification

January 15, 2025, by 5:00 PM Central Time

Any questions arising prior to the question deadline must be submitted in writing to [John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov)



## Tentative Date Answers to Questions or Requests for Clarification Posted

Estimated: January 23, 2025



## Application Submission Deadline

February 12, 2025, by 10:30 AM Central Time



## Anticipated Project Start Date

September 1, 2025



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# Solicitation Access

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HHSC will post all official communication regarding this RFA, including the notice of award on the HHS Grants website located at <https://resources.hhs.texas.gov/rfa>.

HHSC reserves the right to cancel this RFA or make no award if it determines such action is in the best interest of the State.

HHSC may, in its discretion, reject any and all Applications or portions thereof.



# Sole Point of Contact

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All communications relating to this RFA must be directed in writing to John Norton, Sole Point of Contact, at [John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov).

All communications between Applicants and HHSC staff members, or any other HHS staff members, concerning this RFA are **strictly prohibited**.

Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of Application.



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# RFA Overview

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Jody Snee, Division Administrator for Early  
Childhood Programs



# Project Period

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The Project Period is anticipated to be September 1, 2025, through August 31, 2029.

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 five years.



# Grant Funding Source and Available Funding

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The total amount of federal and State funding available for the HOPES grant program is estimated up to \$197,691,408.00 for the entire Project Period. HHSC estimates the total amount of funding for the HOPES Program is \$32,948,568.00 per State Fiscal Year.

It is the System Agency's intention to make multiple awards. Annual awards per individual Grant Agreement typically range between \$300,000.00 and \$2,500,000.00.



# Executive Summary of the HOPES Program

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The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), the System Agency, is accepting Applications for the **Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) Program**.

The purpose of this program is to provide parenting and family support services to expecting families and families with young children, 0 through 5 years of age, promoting the well-being of families, and supporting positive outcomes for children across the State.

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



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# Eligible Applicants

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Applicant must be a nonprofit corporation, as defined by Chapter 22 of the Texas Business Organization Code, or a governmental entity. Applicant must submit a complete Application by the stated deadline. (Refer to RFA Section 3.2, Application Screening Requirements.)



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# Program Background

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The HOPES Program is a community-based program providing a range of services to expecting families and families with young children. HOPES Programs have provided parent education and support through home visiting, parenting workshops, caregiver support groups, and service coordination.

In addition, HOPES Grantees implement community-level approaches and leverage early childhood coalitions to raise awareness about early childhood development, promote child and family well-being, and advance positive outcomes for families with young children.

The HOPES Program addresses community needs through its programming, services, and initiatives and promotes collaboration among community providers and stakeholders to increase protective factors of families with young children across the State.



# Eligible Population

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Any programming, services, and initiatives implemented under a Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA must focus on and be designed to support expecting families and families with young children, 0 through 5 years of age.



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## Eligible Population (continued)

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- A. The eligible service population for the HOPES Program consists of families expecting a child or who have at least one child, 0 through 5 years of age.
- B. For families enrolling in services, HOPES Grantees must identify a Primary Caregiver and an Index Child. The entire family should benefit from services provided through the program.
- C. Grantees must also identify two or more Priority Characteristics, as applicable, for families enrolling in services.





# Eligible Population: Priority Characteristics

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1. Behavioral concern;
2. Childcare or childcare access concerns;
3. Current or former military connection;
4. Current or past alcohol abuse – Caregiver;
5. Current or past child maltreatment or child welfare involvement;
6. Current or past domestic or interpersonal violence;
7. Developmental delay or disability – Caregiver;
8. Developmental delay or disability – Index Child;
9. Family dynamics or structure concern;
10. Family or household conflict;
11. High stress level;
12. Homeless, runaway, or housing instability;
13. Household has a child with developmental delays or disabilities;



# Eligible Population: Priority Characteristics (continued)

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13. Household has a history of alcohol abuse or a need for alcohol abuse treatment;
14. Household has a history of substance use or needs substance use treatment;
15. Low school attainment – Caregiver;
16. Low-income household;
17. Mental health concern – Caregiver;
18. Mental health concern – Index Child;
19. Parenting skills concern;
20. Social support concern;
21. Someone in the household has attained low school achievement or has a child with low student achievement; and
22. Someone in the household uses tobacco products in the home; or
23. Household includes an individual who is pregnant and under 21.



# Eligible Service Areas

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- A. Applicants may propose HOPES programming and services for any Texas county under this RFA.
- B. Applicants may propose to serve a single county or multiple Contiguous Counties as Primary Counties.
- C. HHSC reserves the right to negotiate with Applicants regarding specific geographic coverage. The Grantee's approved service area will be included in the Grant Agreement Statement of Work.
- D. Applicants may use the Community Maltreatment Risk Maps to aid in planning. See <https://www.maltreatment-risk.txsafebabies.org/>. The Community Maltreatment Risk Maps use geographically based risk indicators to illustrate the distribution of maltreatment risk in the State by county and ZIP Code.



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## Eligible Service Areas (continued)

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1. Primary Counties are counties that will be identified in the Grant Agreement Statement of Work that must be served under this award. They are the focus of any outreach and recruitment efforts, grant programming and services, and grant initiatives.
2. Contiguous Counties include any county whose boundary touches at any point with that of another county.
3. Identified services must be available to the entire Primary County or Counties. Services may not be denied to any Family that meets the eligibility requirements if capacity and funding allow for service provision.
4. If an Applicant would like to serve multiple counties that are not Contiguous Counties, the Applicant must submit a separate Application for each county that the Applicant proposes to serve.



# Eligible Activities

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The primary purpose the Grant Project is to provide effective programming and services that promote healthy child development, positive parenting, and family well-being for families with young children, 0 through 5 years of age.

HOPES objectives include promoting healthy outcomes for young children and their families; strengthening systems in which families with young children interact; increasing Protective Factors for families with young children; assisting families with young children in achieving self-sufficiency and stability; promoting workforce participation; promoting school readiness; supporting healthy, nurturing, and safe families for young children; and reducing the risk of child abuse, neglect, and other negative outcomes.

Applications must include plans for effective, quality programming, activities, and services to promote well-being for young children and their families that are designed to achieve the intended outcomes. HOPES Grantees will be required to provide the approved programming and services and demonstrate impact related to the intended outcomes.



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# Eligible Programming

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- A. Grantees must implement quality programming and services to meet program goals and objectives, ensuring competent and effective delivery of programming and services for families with young children, 0 through 5 years of age.
- B. Applicants must identify one or more services or approaches to support families with young children, 0 through 5 years of age in the identified service area.
- C. Applicant's proposed programming should be based on the needs and gaps in the proposed service area as identified in the CSNA (see Section 2.6.1 Community Strengths and Needs Assessment).
- D. Applicants should also address how proposed programming will lead to the intended effects and impact identified in the logic model (see Section 2.6.2 Logic Model).





# Eligible HOPES Programming Examples

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1. Early childhood systems building activities and initiatives
2. Caregiver education and support
3. Parent navigation
4. Service planning and coordination
5. Family Resource Center (FRC) implementation
6. Parenting groups and workshops
7. Caregiver mental health services and support
8. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC)
9. Perinatal and early support services
10. Family workshops and activities to support parent learning and awareness
11. Population-focused programming
12. Financial wellness and literacy programming
13. Short term childcare or respite care
14. Basic needs support (supplemental service)





# Eligible HOPES Programming

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This list of potential programming and initiatives in Section 2.5.1, Eligible Programming, is not an exhaustive list; Applicants may propose other programming, services, supports, and initiatives that may not be listed here.

Applicants will also note that the list is extensive in scope. Applicants should propose programming and services based on community needs, intended outcomes, and the Applicant's capacity to successfully implement the proposed programming and service(s). Applicants may wish to focus programming and initiatives by using one or two approaches, or if proposing multiple approaches, ensure that they are integrated and achievable.

Applicants must identify and describe programming, services, and initiatives for the selected service area that address program objectives and meet community needs and priorities in **Form G, Project Work Plan**. Plans detailed in **Form G, Project Work Plan** should be specific and concise, and describe how the Applicant will implement programming and initiatives.



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# Eligible Programming Delivery Methods

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HHSC prefers in-person programming, which should comprise most programming and service delivery.

However, HHSC recognizes that some initiatives and services are conducted primarily via phone, videoconference, or web-based platforms (e.g., parent navigation, centralized screening and intake, communitywide information and referral, etc.).

HHSC also recognizes the need for flexible access for families and that some programming may be provided in multiple ways to best serve families with young children. For these reasons, Applicants may propose some virtual methods of service delivery as well.



# Program Requirements

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Grantees must provide programming and services as required by the Grant Agreement to the eligible population in the specified service area.

1. The number of unduplicated Participants served must meet the minimum monthly and annual Outputs established in the Grant Agreement.
2. Grantees may only recruit and serve families that are not already receiving the same services.
3. Grantees may not charge Participants any fees to participate in programming and cannot charge Participants for any participation-related costs.
4. Any community-level services, activities, and events the Grantee conducts under the Grant Award must be focused on and tailored for families with young children and expecting families.



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# Program Requirements (continued)

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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.



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# Program Requirements (continued)

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- A. Grantees may use the National Family Support Network's Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support, 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.
- B. Grantees must comply with all policy updates and clarifications that HHSC issues during the Project Period.
- C. Grantees must participate in all HHSC required webinars, trainings, and meetings.





# Program Requirements: Use of Subawards

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1. Grantees 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 must meet the same requirements and levels of experience as required of the Grantee.
2. Applicants must identify any work to be performed by Sub-awardees in **Form G, Project Work Plan** and will include proposed Sub-awardee Budget(s).
3. Grantees 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.



# Program Requirements: Community Strengths and Needs Assessment

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- 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 service area. A comprehensive CSNA will aid in planning and decision making, helping to identify gaps in the community, identify priorities, set goals, plan programming and initiatives to meet those goals, and allocate resources accordingly.
- B. Applicants must conduct a CSNA for their proposed Service Area.
- C. Applicants must use information and insights from the CSNA to identify the needs and priorities of families with young children in their proposed service area.
- D. Applicants should include both quantitative and qualitative data and information in their CSNA. Applicants should also include parent and Caregiver input, insights, and feedback in their CSNA.
- E. The CSNA data, information, and insights should inform the Applicant's logic model. The Applicant's proposed services and activities should be clearly related to identified needs and priorities and supported by CSNA findings.
- F. Applicants must provide a summary of the CSNA as part of **Form F, Program Narrative**.





# Program Requirements: Logic Model

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- A. A logic model is a graphic depiction that shows the relationship between a program's activities and impact – demonstrating the connection between the resources, efforts and activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact of a program. A logic model also shows the impact the program's efforts will have in a measurable way.
- B. A logic model illustrates how activities are designed to bring about change, as well as how other external factors influence program effectiveness; shows how activities will achieve meaningful and measurable results; and draws on relevant research and theory, including the validity of the program design and how the activities align with local needs, contexts, and circumstances.
- C. Applicants must submit a logic model supporting use of the proposed programming and activities. The Applicant's logic model should be informed by the CSNA. The logic model should, in turn, inform the Applicant's **Form F, Program Narrative** and **Form G, Project Work Plan**.
- D. Applicants may use any logic model format. There are many logic model formats but for the purposes of this RFA, logic models should include the following components – resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact.



# Program Requirements: Organizational Qualifications and Experience

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- A. Applicants should describe experience working with and providing services to expecting families and families with young children, 0 through 5 years of age.
- B. Applicants should describe previous experience providing services in the proposed Service Area and community partnerships.
- C. Applicants 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. Applicants should describe how any proposed Sub-awardees meet these organizational qualifications as well.



# Program Requirements: Organizational Competence

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Applicants should address the ability to:

1. Strategically hire and retain direct service staff and supervisor(s) to ensure successful program implementation, family engagement, and quality service provision;
2. Ensure staff are competent in connecting with and serving Participants who have acute Trauma exposure, history or other adverse experiences;
3. Promote programming and services, utilizing outreach methods and materials in a manner that is relevant and compelling to expecting families and families with young children, 0 through 5 years of age; and
4. Reach and engage families from priority populations across proposed communities.

Applicants should describe how any proposed Sub-awardees meet these organizational competencies as well.



# Program Requirements: Program Staffing Plan

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1. Applicants must develop and provide a staffing plan to ensure successful delivery of programming and ability to meet program and Grant requirements. Applicants must describe the program staffing plan in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.
2. The staffing plan, at a minimum, should include the following requirements for all Program Staff:
  - a. Minimum education or licensing requirements;
  - b. Required experience and skills;
  - c. Position responsibilities;
  - d. Comprehensive employee training plan; and
  - e. Coverage plan for all program positions.
3. Applicants should develop a staffing structure for their HOPES Program that addresses the roles and responsibilities outlined in Section B. Program Staff Responsibilities and Requirements, and Section C, Program Director Staffing Requirements.
4. FSS reserves the right to approve each position funded under this Grant.
5. If Grantee elects to enter into a Subaward for any programming, the same minimum staffing qualifications apply to Sub-awardee staff.



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# Program Requirements: Program Staff Responsibilities and Requirements

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1. Applicants must outline proposed staff roles, responsibilities, and qualifications in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.
2. Staff experience, education, and qualifications are at the discretion of the Grantee but should be sufficient to ensure quality programming and service delivery. They should also ensure the ability to meet required service Outputs and achieve intended Outcomes and program impact.
3. HHSC recommends that direct service Program Staff who are responsible for delivering any primary 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, the Grantee must meet those requirements.



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## **Program Requirements: Program Staff Responsibilities and Requirements (continued)**

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Program Staff must:

- a. Complete all FSS-required training and that required by any relevant Program Models;
- b. Adhere to standards of social work or other human services practice as well as any relevant agency or Program Model requirements, policies, procedures, and guidelines;
- c. Employ strengths-based methods; and
- d. Employ Reflective Practice and Reflective Supervision in program operations and service delivery.



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# Program Requirements: Program Director Staffing Requirements

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1. The program director role (or equivalent position, such as program coordinator, program manager, program supervisor) is the primary program contact and is responsible for program oversight, services, and supervision.
2. 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.
3. The program director must have experience with performance evaluation, data analysis, reporting, budget oversight, and social service programming.
4. 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).



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# Program Requirements: Program Director Staffing Requirements (continued)

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The program director will:

- a. Serve as the primary program contact and liaison;
- b. Provide program oversight, to include managing operations, supporting, and monitoring performance related to the project, and planning for improvements where needed;
- c. Ensure program operations and activities adhere to all applicable policies, procedures, and guidelines pertaining to the Grant Agreement, organization, selected Program Model(s), and services;
- d. Ensure program goals are met, especially related to Deliverables, Performance Measures, and processes;
- e. Coordinate budget planning, ensuring budget is aligned with program goals and operations;
- f. Hire, train, and supervise project employees; and
- g. Provide for regular administrative, clinical, and Reflective Supervision of direct service staff.



## Program Requirements: Background Checks

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



## Program Requirements: Organizational Training

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1. The Applicant must submit a training plan as part of **Form G, Project Work Plan**, for all HOPES Program Staff, including direct service staff and anyone else working on the grant that includes both initial and ongoing training.
2. Grantee must develop and follow a process to track all required training in personnel files.
3. All training must be noted in the regular program quarterly reports.
4. The same minimum training requirements must be met by any Sub-awardee performing services under this award.
5. Program Staff training must include the following:
  - a. New employee orientation;
  - b. Mental Health First Aid Training; and
  - c. Program Model trainings (as applicable).
6. Refer to the RFA for additional potential training topics.



## Program Requirements: Recruitment, Outreach, and Retention

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- A. Applicants should describe outreach and recruitment plans and strategies to connect to eligible families **Form G, Project Work Plan.**
- B. Applicants should describe plans to promote participant retention in **Form G, Project Work Plan.**
- C. Efforts must be made by the Grantee to ensure that eligible families are not denied or delayed services due to a wait list. The Grantee must have Referral policies and procedures in place that provide alternative service options either through the Grantee or through other community resources when the Grantee is at capacity.



# Program Requirements: Service Authorization and Enrollment

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- A. Grantees must have a documented process for conducting intakes and completing enrollments, including how the Family's individual eligibility is determined.
- B. Grantees must have an enrollment process that captures all required data, which includes a Primary Caregiver's signed consent to participate, eligibility criteria, and any additional surveys or assessments as required by HHSC.
- C. Grantees will complete enrollments as applicable and ensure that all required data is entered in PEIRS.
- D. Grantees 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 services, for as long the Participant receives programming.



# Program Requirements: Program Surveys

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- Where required by HHSC, Grantees must administer a pre-service Protective Factors Survey (PFS) to Primary Caregivers enrolling in relevant programming.
- Grantees must also administer a post-service Protective Factors Survey to Primary Caregivers at the end of any relevant program participation.
- Grantees must enter the PFS data into PEIRS within the required data entry timeframe.
- Grantees must also maintain any pre-service PFS and post-service PFS in Participant Records.





# Program Requirements: Program Experience Surveys

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- Where required by HHSC, Grantees must complete the Program Experience Survey (PES) with the Primary Caregiver at the end of any relevant programming.
- The PES must be completed for those Participants who have completed the relevant services as well as for those who may be exiting early.



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## Program Requirements: Service Completion

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- A. Grantees must document service completion as required by HHSC and in PEIRS when services are completed.
- B. Grantees must have a documented process for service completion and forms completion that includes collecting any required surveys from Participants and documenting any additional referrals.
- C. Grantees must enter any referrals made for additional services to other local social service providers in PEIRS.
- D. Applicants must describe the process for service completion and discharge in Form G, Project Work Plan.



# Program Requirements: Community and Systems Support Requirements

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Applicants must describe plans for community and systems-level engagement in **Form G, Project Work Plan**.

Refer to Section 2.6.10 in the RFA for requirements.



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# Program Requirements: Required Record Keeping

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Grantee service documentation and Participant Records must be maintained by Grantees to reflect details of required programming and services and to support programmatic efforts and improvements. Grantees must have Participant Records and service activity documentation system(s), processes, and procedures. Grantees must have policies and procedures regarding how records and service activity documentation are maintained and utilized to support Participant services. These must identify the information required in Participant Records and service activity notes. Grantees must have a quality assurance process and procedures regarding Participant Records and service activity documentation.

Refer to Section 2.6.11 in the RFA for requirements.



# Required Reports: Quarterly Reports

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Grantees must submit Quarterly Reports to FSS regarding implementation efforts, achievements, challenges, and other issues relevant to performance. FSS will provide Quarterly Report templates to Grantees.

Section 2.7.1 Table 1. in the RFA provides due dates for all Quarterly Reports.



# Required Reports: PEIRS Data Entry

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Grantees are required to enter data pertaining to Participant enrollments, service activities, and program events activities in PEIRS.

Refer to Section 2.7.2. of the RFA for requirements.





# Performance Measures and Monitoring

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Refer to Section 2.8 of the RFA for complete requirements.

A. Applicants will propose the following, in **Form G, Project Work Plan**:

1. Total number of Families to be served monthly; and
2. Total number of Families to be served annually.

Proposed number of Families to be served must be based on the type(s) of proposed programming, duration of each, and proposed staffing.

B. Outputs and Outcomes will be determined through the negotiations process, prior to award of a Grant Agreement, and based on available funds and FSS requirements. HHSC reserves the right to make final determination on Outputs and Outcomes for any Grant Agreement awarded as a result of this RFA. Additional Outputs or Outcomes may be added during the Performance Period.



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# Grant Funding Prohibitions

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Refer to Section 5.3 of the RFA for a complete list of prohibitions.



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# Cost Sharing

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HHSC does not require Cost Sharing for this grant.

However, to ensure that funds are available to support the broadest array of communities and programs, and to maximize overall impact of the Program, requests for funding may not be fully met and grant awards may not cover the entire cost of a Grantee's Grant Project.

Awarded funding may remain the same year over year and may not cover increasing or unexpected costs during the Project Period.



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# Payment Method

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Grant Agreements 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 on a monthly basis and supported by adequate documentation.

No additional payments will be rendered unless an advanced payment is approved.



# Notice to Proceed

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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.

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.

Grantee will be notified of a change to the availability of funds through the NTP.



# Evaluation Process Overview

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A three-step selection process will be used:

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



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# Evaluation Criteria

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Qualified Applications will be evaluated based upon:

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



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# Final Selection

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The System Agency will make final awards based on evaluation scores, geographic distribution across the State, Applicant past performance (if applicable), Cost Sharing, existing infrastructure, State priorities, and availability of funding. HHSC may not fully fund request 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.



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# Exceptions

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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 of the RFA.**

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.



# Required Submission Method

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Applicant must correctly deliver Solicitation Responses by one of the methods below:

- Submission Option #1 HHS Online Bid Room
- Submission Option #2 Sealed Package with USB Drives

**Refer to Section 8.3 of the RFA for requirements.**



# Submission of Forms and Exhibits

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Applicants must complete and submit Forms and Exhibits in accordance with the RFA, Section XIII, Submission Checklist of the RFA.

Applications that do not include **Exhibit A, HHS Solicitation Affirmations** (completed and signed), and **Exhibit G, Budget Request** (completed), will be disqualified. See Section 9.2, Initial Compliance Screening of Applications of the RFA for further detail.



# Questions and Answers

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All questions **must** be submitted in writing to the Sole Point of Contact using the formatting below from the RFA, Section 7.3, RFA Questions and Requests for Clarification:

- A. RFA number;
- B. Section number or Paragraph number;
- C. Page number;
- 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.

Submit questions via email to: [John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov](mailto:John.Norton2@hhs.texas.gov) **by 5:00 PM on January 15, 2025.**





# Question Deadline

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- Questions are due by **5:00 PM on Wednesday, January 15, 2025.**
- Questions received after this deadline cannot be responded to.
- An addendum will be posted to the HHS Grants Website with the answers to questions **on or after January 23, 2025.**



# Closing Comments

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- Applicants are responsible for meeting the RFA requirements, including any addendums.
- All Addendums must be signed and submitted with the original application.
- Applicants must check the HHS Grants website frequently for any addendums that may have been added to this solicitation.



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## **HHS Grants Website**

The link is: <https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/PCS/HHS0015358/>



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# Thank you!

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**Request for Applications No. HHS0015358**

**Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early  
Support (HOPES)**