



Commissioner
Jaime Masters

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

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Jaime Masters, Commissioner

**Request for Applications (RFA)
for
Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES)
RFA No. HHS0008553**

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Class/Item Code:

**952/17-Child Abuse: Identification, Treatment and Prevention,
Including Sexual Abuse**

952/67- Human Services / Parenting Intervention Services

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ARTICLE I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, DEFINITIONS, AND AUTHORITY

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

To be considered for Award, Applicants must execute **Exhibit A, Affirmations and Grant Opportunity Acceptance**, of this RFA and provide all other required information and documentation as set forth in this RFA including **Article IX, Submission Checklist**.

1.2 DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

“**Application**” is a document submitted by an Applicant in response to this RFA. Used interchangeably with the term “Response.”

“**Applicant**” is the entity applying in response to this RFA.

“**Award**” is the act of communicating acceptance of an Application to the Applicant, thereby forming a Grant Agreement.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Confidential Participant information, including protected health information;
2. All non-public budget, expense, payment, and other financial information;
3. All privileged work product;
4. All information designated by HHS or any other State Agency as confidential, including all information designated as confidential under the Texas Public Information Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 552;
5. Unless publicly disclosed by HHS or the State, the pricing, payments, and terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement;
6. Information that is utilized, developed, received, or maintained by HHS, the Grantee, or DFPS to fulfill a duty or obligation under this Grant Agreement and that has not been publicly disclosed; and
7. Any other information deemed confidential under State or federal confidentiality laws.

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

“Contract” is a promise or a set of promises, for breach of which the law gives a remedy, or the performance of which the law in some way recognizes as a duty. It is an agreement between two or more parties creating obligations that are enforceable or otherwise recognizable at law. The term also encompasses the written document that describes the terms of the agreement. Used interchangeably with the term “Grant Agreement” for this RFA.

“Child Protective Services (CPS)” is the child welfare division of Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

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

“Cultural Humility” is the ability of individuals and systems to maintain an openness to on-going learning and self-reflection around culture; recognizing that people are multi-dimensional and have their own experiences of their respective culture or cultures; and addressing any related power dynamics to build healthy partnerships among people, organizations, and systems. Used interchangeably with the term “Cultural Competency.”

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

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

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

"Effective Date" is the date upon which the parties agree the Grant Agreement shall take effect.

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

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

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

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

"Grant" is an award from DFPS to an entity through this RFA for HOPES services.

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

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

"Grantee" is an entity awarded a Grant Agreement pursuant to this RFA to provide services. Used interchangeably with the terms "Grant Recipient", "Sub-Recipient", "Successful Applicant", and "Provider" for this RFA.

"Health and Human Services (HHS)" is the administrative agency established under Chapter 531, Texas Government Code or its designee.

"Health and Human Services Field" is a professional field or field of study which has a focus on the safety and welfare of individuals and Families. Example fields include but are not limited to: sociology, social work, nursing, psychology, public health, and counseling.

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

"HOPES" is the Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support program as funded through PEI.

"HUB" is the Historically Underutilized Business Program.

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

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

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

"Local Coalition" is a community-based collaborative, coalition, committee, or group.

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

"Non-Responsive" is when the Application's noncompliance with a material aspect of the RFA results in the Application's exclusion from Grant Award consideration.

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

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

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

"PEI" is the Prevention and Early Intervention Division of DFPS.

"PEI Program Staff" are employees who work for DFPS PEI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

“**Program Model**” is the Evidence-Based, Evidence-Informed, or Promising Practice model implemented by the Grantee.

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

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

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

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

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

“**Qualified Personnel**” are persons with appropriate and enough education, training, experience, and for some positions, credentials or licensure.

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

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

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

“**Region**” refers to Texas DFPS Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.

“**Responsive**” is when the Applicant has complied with all material aspects of the RFA, including submission of all required documents.

“**Safe**” is secure from maltreatment or the risk of danger or harm.

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

“**Secondary County**” is a Contiguous County proposed in this RFA in which a Participant may receive HOPES services.

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

“**Service Delivery Area (SDA)**” is the geographical area designated by DFPS, within which Grant services are to be provided.

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

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

“**Subaward**” is a written agreement that assigns portions of the obligations of a Grantee to a third party selected by the Grantee. The third party assumes some of the obligations of the Grantee while the Grantee remains completely responsible for all actions carried out by the Subawardee. Subaward may be used interchangeably with the terms “Subcontract” or “Subgrant” for this RFA.

“**Subawardee**” is any entity that has entered into a Subaward with the Grantee to assume some of the obligations of the Grantee. Used interchangeably with the terms “Subcontractor” or “Subgrantee.”

“**Uniform Terms and Conditions (UTCs)**” is the terms and conditions applicable to any Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA that governs the Application and any resulting Grant Agreement.

1.3 AUTHORITY

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is requesting Applications under its authority in [Texas Human Resources Code Section 40.058](#) and [Texas Family Code Section 265.002](#).

ARTICLE II. SCOPE OF GRANT AWARD

2.1 PROGRAM BACKGROUND

PEI partners with community-based programs and agencies to provide a variety of services that help prevent abuse, neglect, delinquency, and truancy of Texas Children. Not all services are available in all Texas communities. Services provided under this RFA are free of charge and participation is voluntary.

Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) is a community-based program providing Child abuse and neglect prevention services by offering parent education, service coordination, parent advocacy, and basic needs support for Families with Children between zero (0) through five (5) years of age.

PEI issued Grants to community organizations in targeted counties to provide a home-visiting program, community coalition, and services to promote Child welfare, early childhood education, and other Family services. The HOPES program addresses Child abuse and neglect prevention by focusing on community collaboration in high risk counties to increase Protective Factors of Families served to reduce the likelihood of abuse.

This RFA will continue in the established service areas and expand to other Texas counties where there is high risk for Child maltreatment. The continuation of Child maltreatment prevention programming in counties already implementing HOPES will ensure a positive impact on county-level Child maltreatment rates across Texas.

2.2 GRANT OVERVIEW

2.2.1 Service Delivery Area (SDA)

- A. Under this RFA, Applicants may propose one of the following per Application:
 1. To serve a Primary County; or
 2. To serve a Primary County and Contiguous County(ies).
- B. Primary Counties include all Texas counties except those counties currently funded through HOPES I. HOPES I counties that are **not** included in the Service Delivery Area (SDA) for this RFA include: Cameron, Ector, El Paso, Gregg, Harrison, Hidalgo, Hood, Midland, Navarro, Parker, Potter, Randall, Smith, Travis, Webb, and Willacy. All other Texas counties are eligible under this RFA.
- C. Contiguous Counties include any county whose boundary touches at any point with that of a Primary County.
- D. 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.

- E. Identified services must be available to the entire Primary County and any identified Contiguous Counties. Services may not be denied to any Family that meets the eligibility requirements if capacity and funding allow for service provision.

2.2.2 Available Funding

- A. The total amount of funding anticipated annually for this Grant Opportunity is \$14,000,000. DFPS anticipates making fifteen (15) to twenty (20) awards. Anticipated annual awards may range between \$100,000 and \$3,400,000. The average amount currently funded for HOPES Grants is \$1,000,000 annually. The minimum award for the four-year term of the Grant is \$400,000 and the maximum award is \$13,600,000. To account for potential increases to available funding, this RFA is valued at up to \$90,000,000 for the entire Period of Performance. DFPS may not fully fund Applications to ensure that funds are available for the broadest possible array of communities.
- B. Grants Awarded from this RFA are on a cost reimbursement basis. Under the cost reimbursement method of funding, Grant Recipients are required to finance operations with their own funds. DFPS will reimburse Grant Recipients for actual cash disbursements supported by adequate documentation. DFPS will only reimburse actual, allowable, and allocable expenses that occur within the Period of Performance.
- C. HOPES services are funded with State general revenue and may also be funded with federal funds from Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF), CFDA 93.556. The exact amount of State or federal funding is determined by DFPS at the end of each subsequent fiscal year. DFPS will notify the Grantee in writing of the exact amount of federal or State dollars used to fund the Grant upon written request from the Grantee. The Grantee will be considered a Sub-Recipient.
- D. DFPS reserves the right to increase funding for Grantees through supplemental Amendments if PEI identifies additional funds at any time during the Period of Performance. Alternatively, DFPS may reduce awards or cancel a Grant Agreement if funding is decreased during the Period of Performance. Any increase or decrease in number of awards or funding amounts are at DFPS' sole discretion.

2.2.3 Period of Performance

- A. The Period of Performance for this Grant is four years and is expected to begin **September 1, 2021** and be effective through **August 31, 2025**.
- B. DFPS anticipates that the initial term of any Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA will be for a period of four (4) years (base term). Following the base term, DFPS, at its sole option, may extend any resulting Grant Agreement for one additional 12-month term to complete a new RFA or to transition to a new Grantee.

2.3 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be Awarded a Grant from this RFA, an Applicant must be a non-profit entity as described by Texas Business Organization Code Chapter 22 or a governmental entity.

2.4 PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

DFPS seeks to Award Grants to qualified Eligible Applicants to provide Family intervention and prevention services.

Applications must include plans that will increase Protective Factors for Families, support healthy, nurturing, and Safe homes for Children, and reduce the risk of Child abuse, neglect, and other negative Outcomes in accordance with specifications contained in this RFA. Grantees will provide Evidence-Based or Promising Practice Program services, or services incorporating evidence-based strategies to strengthen Families with Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age in select counties.

2.5 SCOPE OF WORK

- A. The Grantee agrees to adhere to the requirements outlined in Article II Scope of Grant Award in the provision of services to Participants under this Grant.
- B. The Applicant should propose programming or planning efforts and activities to meet the objectives described in Section 2.4. The Applicant should propose resources and activities that incorporate the characteristics and needs of the eligible service population as defined in Section 2.5.2.
- C. Applicants must propose any of the following for the identified Service Delivery Area county(ies):
 - 1. To sustain or expand an existing HOPES program; or
 - 2. To implement a new HOPES program.

2.5.1 Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA)

The CSNA is an assessment developed and utilized by the Applicant to identify community strengths, needs, assets, characteristics, challenges, and available resources.

- A. Applicant should conduct or utilize a current CSNA, paying specific attention to this Grant's identified Participant population. The CSNA should focus on supporting pregnant women and Families with Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age.
- B. Applicant should take care to identify the available assets, community resources, and services in the proposed Service Delivery Area. In addition, the CSNA should specify additional supports that the Applicant will make available to the identified Participant population.
- C. The results of the CSNA should align with the proposed HOPES services and programming in the Application.
- D. Applicant may use multiple resources to develop the CSNA including, but not limited to:
 - 1. PEI and UT Population Health Maltreatment Risk Mapping, <https://utsys-pop-health.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=265e988d96464d789c744a56dc79e0d0%20>;
 - 2. Medicaid and WIC eligible population and use information;
 - 3. Census information, <https://census.gov/>;

4. Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov>;
5. County Health Rankings, <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org>; or
6. Data from Texas State Agency sources.

2.5.2 Eligible Service Population

- A. The eligible service population is comprised of Families that include a Primary Caregiver expecting a Child or who has at least one Child zero (0) to five (5) years of age. The Grantee must identify an Index Child; however, the entire Family should benefit from the prevention services provided.
- B. Grantees will also identify one or more of the following Priority Characteristics for each Participant enrollment, if applicable:
 1. Behavioral concern;
 2. Current or former military connection;
 3. Current or past alcohol abuse – Caregiver;
 4. Current or past Child maltreatment or Child welfare involvement;
 5. Current or past domestic or interpersonal violence;
 6. Developmental delay or disability – Caregiver;
 7. Family dynamics or structure concern;
 8. Family or household conflict;
 9. High stress level;
 10. Homeless or runaway;
 11. Household has a Child with developmental delays or disabilities;
 12. Household has a history of alcohol abuse or a need for alcohol abuse treatment;
 13. Household has a history of substance abuse or needs substance abuse treatment;
 14. Low school attainment – Caregiver;
 15. Low-income household;
 16. Mental health concern – Caregiver;
 17. Parenting skills concern;
 18. Social support concern;
 19. Someone in the household has attained low school achievement or has a Child with low student achievement;
 20. Someone in the household uses tobacco products in the home; or
 21. Household contains an enrollee who is pregnant and under 21.
- C. Grantee should also plan to serve and target outreach and recruitment efforts toward pregnant and parenting current and former foster Youth who meet HOPES eligibility criteria. DFPS may refer pregnant and parenting foster Youth directly to Grantee. Grantee must prioritize services for these eligible Families and follow PEI data collection and reporting requirements.

2.5.3 Service Participants

Participants served through this RFA must meet the following requirements:

1. All Participants must enter and participate in the program voluntarily. Voluntarily means that the Participant must not be coerced, court-ordered, or mandated to participate in HOPES;
2. Participants must be Primary Caregivers expecting a Child or who have a Child or Children zero (0) to five (5) years of age; and
3. Grantee cannot charge the Participants any fees to participate in programming and cannot charge Participants for any participation-related costs.

2.5.4 Organizational Qualifications

Applicant should meet the following qualifications:

1. Applicant should have at least five (5) years' experience working with expectant and parenting individuals, as well as, vulnerable Families or overseeing services to this population;
2. Applicant should have provided services in the identified Service Delivery Area county(ies) for a minimum of three (3) years immediately preceding the submission of the Application;
3. Applicant should demonstrate, either through the Applicant's own experience and programming or through formal partnerships with local service providers, expertise in the following:
 - a. Mental and emotional distress;
 - b. Trauma;
 - c. Perinatal mood disorder(s); and
 - d. Substance use.
4. Applicant should have at least five (5) years' experience managing budgets and grants or Contracts for social services;
5. Applicant that has monitoring reports from any Texas State Agency, or federal funding entity, or audits performed on Applicant's organization during the past three (3) years should be able to demonstrate that the organization is competent in managing and budgeting its programs and operations;
6. 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 HOPES program; and
7. Subawardees performing services under this award should meet these same organizational qualifications.

2.5.5 Organizational Competence

- A. Applicants proposing to sustain, expand, or implement new HOPES programming must demonstrate preparedness to implement HOPES programming to Caregivers with

Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age and their Families. Applicants must address the following:

1. Ability to strategically hire and retain direct service staff and supervisor(s) to ensure successful program implementation and quality service provision;
 2. Ability to make support available to Participants through accessible service hours, service delivery methods, and schedules;
 3. Ability to ensure staff are competent in connecting with and serving Participants who have high trauma exposure or history or other adverse experiences;
 4. Ability to promote the program and utilize recruitment materials in a manner that is relevant and compelling to Families with Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age and those who support them; and
 5. Ability to reach and engage diverse and high-need Caregivers across proposed communities.
- B. Applicants may propose to use the [National Support Network's Standards of Quality](#), or Applicants may propose another quality framework to assess the Applicant's organization and services for responsiveness to the needs of Participants and the community and to enhance their approach and services for the Period of Performance.
- C. Applications will be scored on the reasonableness of the readiness or implementation plan, timeline, and likelihood of success.

2.5.6 Staffing Qualifications

- A. The Applicant will develop and provide a staffing plan that details clear processes to recruit, hire, and train qualified Program Staff to include supervisors, administrative staff, direct service staff, and volunteers as applicable.
- B. The staffing plan should ensure quality programming and service delivery with fidelity to any selected Program Models' elements and requirements. The plan must address:
1. Minimum educational and licensing requirements;
 2. Required experience and skills;
 3. Detailed position descriptions;
 4. Comprehensive training plan; and
 5. Continuity of services in the event of a vacancy.

2.5.7 Program Staff Responsibilities and Requirements

- A. Program Staff must provide assessment, education, and support as they assist Caregivers and their Families in attaining identified goals.
- B. Program Staff must adhere to standards of social work or other human services practice as well as any selected Program Model's requirements, policies, procedures, and guidelines.

- C. Direct service Program Staff who are primarily responsible for delivering any core services or Evidence-Based Program components must have an associate degree or higher in a Health and Human Services Field, along with two (2) or more years of direct service experience in a Health and Human Services Field. A bachelor's degree is preferred, along with two (2) or more years of direct service experience in a Health and Human Services Field. If the Evidence-Based Programs proposed have more stringent requirements or preferred qualifications, the Grantee must meet those Evidence-Based Program requirements rather than the minimum requirements cited in this section.
- D. Program Staff must:
 - 1. Complete all required training specified by PEI and any selected Program Model(s), including web-based and onsite education conducted by model developer(s) as well as any required local trainings;
 - 2. Employ strengths-based approaches;
 - 3. Employ Reflective Practice and Reflective Supervision in program operations and service delivery;
 - 4. Assist Participants with applying for Medicaid and other State resources as needed;
 - 5. Carry a Participant caseload within recommended Program Model guidelines for any selected Program Model(s), not to exceed twenty-five (25) Participants per direct service FTE;
 - 6. Provide services to Participants within the designated Service Delivery Area; and
 - 7. Be available to work a flexible schedule that may include evenings and weekends to accommodate Participants' needs.
- E. If the Grantee elects to Subaward any services, the same minimum staffing qualifications and requirements will apply to Subaward staff, including direct service staff.

2.5.8 Program Director Staffing Requirements

- A. Any person holding the program director position or performing program director responsibilities must have at least a bachelor's degree in a relevant field, with relevant work experience, and a minimum of five (5) years of relevant program management and supervisory experience. A master's degree in a relevant field, along with a minimum of three (3) years program management and supervisory experience is preferred.
- B. The program director must have experience with performance evaluation, data analysis, reporting, budget oversight, and social service programming.
- C. The program director role, or equivalent position, will be the primary program contact and will be responsible for program oversight, services, and supervision. The following responsibilities and activities are required of the program director role or must be integrated into other appropriate manager roles where qualifications are met. Clear

organizational structure is required, with program director responsibilities clearly accounted for and assigned to the qualified FTE(s). The program director will:

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

2.5.9 Organizational Training Requirements

- A. The Applicant must submit a training plan for all HOPES Program Staff, including direct service staff, volunteers, and anyone else working on the Grant that includes both initial and ongoing training;
 1. Grantee must develop and follow a process to track all required training in personnel files;
 2. All training must be noted in the regular program quarterly reports; and
 3. The same minimum training requirements must be met by any Subawardee performing services under this Award.
- B. The Grantee's organization must implement any required and proposed training.
- C. Program Staff training must include the following competencies:
 1. New employee orientation;
 2. Mental Health First Aid Training;
 3. Cultural Humility;
 4. Diversity, inclusion and equity; and
 5. Any required Program Model trainings.
- D. Additional training topics may include, but are not limited to:
 1. Breastfeeding;
 2. Case documentation;
 3. Case management;
 4. Child development;
 5. Co-Parenting;

6. Healthy relationships;
7. Effective collaboration;
8. Effective group or meeting facilitation;
9. Ethics;
10. Motivational interviewing;
11. Referrals and service connections;
12. Reflective Practice and Reflective Supervision;
13. Safe sleep;
14. Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support (if applicable);
15. Substance use; and
16. Trauma-informed approaches.

2.5.10 Programming Requirements and Guidance

- A. The Grantee must:
 1. Implement any selected program with fidelity to the Program Model(s);
 2. Provide Reflective Supervision for Program Staff, especially direct service staff, a minimum of two (2) times per month;
 3. Integrate case discussion, ongoing education, and professional development as part of supervision;
 4. Maintain caseloads of no more than twenty-five (25) Families for any full-time direct service staff; and
 5. Meet requirements and preferred qualifications of any selected Evidence-Based Programs.
- B. Grantees must incorporate intentional, ongoing efforts to support and make resources available to Caregivers and Families.
- C. The Applicant may also propose supplemental initiatives or additional support services to address needs of Participants, that could include:
 1. Resources and Referrals to connect program Participants to supports and services apart from those available through the Applicant or its Subawardees;
 2. Mental health services or consultation;
 3. Basic needs support;
 4. Parenting support groups;
 5. Childcare and respite care.

2.5.11 Recruitment and Outreach

- A. Applicants shall develop and provide an outreach plan to connect to eligible Families, including recruitment strategies. In addition to standard means such as dissemination of brochures and attending community events, outreach to eligible individuals within the community should include innovative and targeted approaches as well. Innovative approaches could include, but are not limited to, connecting with foster Youth service

providers, establishing relationships with businesses that cater to Families, use of social media, etc.

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

2.5.12 Service Authorization and Enrollment

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

2.5.13 Required Record Keeping

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

- A. Grantee will track all services provided in accordance with the approved Project Work Plan (PWP) and by using the appropriate PEI, Grantee, and Program Model documentation forms.
- B. Grantee must ensure that all service documentation is complete, accurate, and maintained in an organized fashion.
- C. Grantee must maintain records in a manner which protects the confidentiality of the Families being served.
- D. The Grantee must maintain individual Participant records.

- E. The Grantee must ensure compliance with all record keeping requirements stated in this document.
- F. The Grantee must maintain all records in a central location and make available and accessible to DFPS without limitations.
- G. The Grantee may maintain records electronically; however, Grantee must be able to promptly produce an easily-legible hard copy of any records, if requested by DFPS.
- H. Referrals Tracking
 - 1. Grantee must develop and maintain a tracking system to record Participants referred to the Grantee for program services, to include:
 - a. Date of Referral;
 - b. Origin of the Referral;
 - c. Participant eligibility for services; and
 - d. Date Participant began program.
 - 2. Grantee must also track reasons that services were not provided or that a Participant did not engage in program or was determined to be ineligible.
- I. Participant Case Record and Service Documentation

Grantee must maintain the following forms in the Participant record or file.

 - a. Enrollment form;
 - b. Annual Data Authorization form;
 - c. Valid documentation consenting to HOPES participation;
 - d. Required PEI assessments and surveys;
 - e. Assessments and surveys required by the Grantee and any selected Program Model(s);
 - f. Service plans;
 - g. Service activity documentation, i.e. case notes documenting service activity;
 - h. Basic needs assistance documentation;
 - i. For Participants in group services like curriculum-based groups or support groups, documentation should include dated service notes with a general description of topics covered as well as any achievements or issues on which to follow up; and
 - j. Service Referrals.

2.5.14 Surveys

- A. Prior to service delivery, the Grantee must provide a pre-service Protective Factors survey to the Primary Caregiver. The Grantee may provide this survey to any secondary Caregivers who are participating in program services. The survey must be provided either shortly before or at the beginning of the first service session. Grantee must enter the survey data into the Prevention and Early Intervention Reporting System (PEIRS) database within the required data entry timeframe.

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

2.5.15 Case Closure Procedure

- A. The process for closing Participant files must include the collection of any required PEI or required Program Model surveys.
- B. The Grantee must document closure of the case through the Participant discharge form and in the PEIRS database or other data reporting tools when services are complete.
- C. Any Referrals made for additional services to other local social service providers must be entered into PEIRS within thirty (30) calendar days of discharge.

2.5.16 Community and Systems Support Requirements

A. Local Coalitions:

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

B. Examples of coalition activities include:

1. Improving coordination of existing services and resources and advocating for additional services or resources to improve experiences and Outcomes for pregnant and parenting individuals and Families with Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age.

2. Engaging the Participant population in community service planning or community development efforts.
 3. Developing a subcommittee to assess and improve service delivery for pregnant and parenting individuals and Families with Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age in the community.
- C. A community coalition that is an appropriate fit for a Grantee under this RFA should
1. Integrate proposed Family support systems within the community;
 2. Encourage collaboration among area agencies to ensure a range of the needs of Families with Children zero (0) through five (5) years of age are met;
 3. Identify barriers to service delivery and find solutions to those barriers; and
 4. Address sustainability of the RFA's goals beyond the period of the Grant Agreement resulting from this RFA.

2.5.17 Collaborating with PEI Grantees

- A. Grantee must coordinate and collaborate with other PEI Grantees within their identified county(ies) in addition to PEI Grantees in the Region.
- B. Through partnership and awareness of other Grantees' service array, Grantee will avoid duplication of services and create a continuum of services in the community.

2.5.18 Performance Measures

- A. Performance Measures are required for every Grantee. PEI and Applicant will finalize Performance Measures during the negotiation process. DFPS reserves the right to make the final determination on the Performance Measures for this RFA.
- B. To establish any additional Outcomes, Applicants must:
 1. Describe additional intended Outcome(s);
 2. Define identified Outcome(s) as a quantitative measure (such as, % of Participants demonstrating new or optimal behavior, % of Participants engaging in desired activity, etc.);
 3. Confirm that desired Outcomes are linked to Outputs or activities. Ensure that it is reasonable to expect desired Outcomes would be achieved based on Applicant's program activities;
 4. Implement these measures and track over time; and
 5. Demonstrate program impact and value through data and performance tracking.
- C. PEI will track required Performance Measures through PEIRS and other Data Sources developed and maintained by DFPS.
- D. Examples of measures likely to be incorporated into all HOPES Grants include, but are not limited to:

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

*Final Output numbers will be established and confirmed during Grant negotiations.

2.5.19 Background Checks

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

Before the employee, Subgrantee, or volunteer can provide direct services, have direct Participant contact, or access Participant records, the Grantee must receive notice from DFPS that the background check has been approved.

2.5.20 PEIRS Database

- A. Grantees must enter all service data for Participants served through HOPES into the PEIRS database. Data entered into the PEIRS database includes Participant enrollment information, service data, and Outcomes data (may include survey and assessment data).
- B. Grantees must ensure accurate data entry into the PEIRS database and must enter all data for a specific month into the system no later than thirty (30) calendar days following the close of the month in which an enrollment occurred, services were provided, or a Family was discharged.
- C. Grantees must use a secure internet connection to complete PEIRS data entry and ensure that computer equipment used for data entry meets minimum requirements established by DFPS for efficient connection to the PEIRS database (at the time of this Grant Opportunity, Internet Explorer 11 or higher or Google Chrome 47 or higher).
- D. For any person to be approved for database access, prior DFPS and criminal background check clearance must be obtained and completed every two (2) years.
- E. Any person given permission to enter or view HOPES Program data must adhere to DFPS rules, regulations and standards for confidentiality, security, and integrity of program data. See **Exhibit C, DFPS Grant Supplemental and Special Conditions**.

2.5.21 Required Reports

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

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

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

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

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

If the due date is on a weekend or holiday, the report is due the first business day following the weekend or holiday.

2.5.22 Required Personnel Records

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

- A. Documentation clearly establishing that the Grantee's Program Staff meet the minimum qualifications as required*;
- B. Employment Eligibility Verification (I-9);

- C. Background checks;
- D. Business files to support compliance with insurance requirements; and
- E. Completed training.

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

2.5.23 Financial Requirements

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

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

2.5.24 Billing Requirements

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

2.5.25 Additional Program Requirements

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

about the program and is authorized to make decisions attends the webinar, training, or conference call.

2.5.26 Use of Subawards

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

2.5.27 Transition Plan

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

2.6 PROHIBITIONS

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

- A. Inherently religious activities such as prayer, worship, religious instruction, or proselytization;
- B. Lobbying;
- C. Any portion of the salary of, or any other compensation for, an elected or appointed government official;
- D. Vehicles or equipment for government agencies that are for general agency use;
- E. Weapons, ammunition, tracked armored vehicles, weaponized vehicles, or explosives;
- F. Admission fees or tickets to any amusement park, recreational activity, or sporting event **unless such costs are incurred for components of a program approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;**
- G. Promotional gifts; **except as approved by the grantor agency and directly related to the program's purpose;**
- H. Food, meals, beverages, or other refreshments, except for eligible per diem associated with Grant-related travel, where pre-approved for working events, or **approved by the grantor agency and are directly related to the program's purpose;**
- I. Membership dues for individuals **except where approved by the grantor and required for program implementation;**

- J. Any expense or service that is readily available at no cost to the Grant project;
- K. Any use of Grant funds to replace (supplant) funds that have been budgeted for the same purpose through non-Grant sources;
- L. Fundraising;
- M. The acquisition or construction of facilities; and
- N. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, State, or local law.

2.7 STANDARDS

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

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

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

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

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

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

discriminate against a program beneficiary or prospective program beneficiary on the basis of religion or religious belief.

2.8 NO GUARANTEE OF VOLUME, USAGE, OR COMPENSATION

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

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

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

ARTICLE III. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

3.1 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT	DATE/TIME
RFA Release Date	October 30, 2020
Applicant Webinar	November 12, 2020 at 11:00am Central Time
Deadline for Submitting Questions	December 9, 2020 at 2:00pm Central Time
Answers to Questions Tentatively Posted	December 18, 2020
Deadline for Submission of Grant Applications [Note: Applications must be <u>received</u> by HHS by the deadline.]	January 29, 2021 at 10:30 A.M. Central Time
Anticipated Notice of Award	July 1, 2021
Anticipated Grant Start Date	September 1, 2021

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

3.2 CHANGES, AMENDMENT OR MODIFICATION TO RFA

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

3.3 IRREGULARITIES

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

3.4 INQUIRIES

3.4.1 Sole Point of Contact

All requests, questions, or other communication about this RFA shall be made in writing to DFPS' sole point of contact addressed to the person listed below. All communications between Applicants and DFPS staff members concerning the RFA are strictly prohibited, unless noted elsewhere in this RFA. **Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of Applicant's Grant Application.**

Jennifer Kim, CTCD, CTCM
Health and Human Services Commission
1100 West 49th Street; Mail Code 2020
Building S
Austin, TX 78756
jennifer.kim@hhs.texas.gov

3.4.2 Prohibited Communications

All communications between Applicants and HHS or DFPS staff members concerning the RFA may not be relied upon, and Applicant should send all questions or other communications to the sole point of contact. This restriction does not preclude discussions between affected parties for the purposes of conducting business unrelated to this RFA. **Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification of Applicant's Grant Application.**

3.4.3 Questions

DFPS will allow written questions and requests for clarification of this RFA. Questions must be submitted in writing and sent by email to the sole point of contact listed in **Section 3.4.1**. Applicants' names will be removed from questions in any Responses released. Questions shall be submitted in the following format:

- A. Identifying RFA Number
- B. Section Number
- C. Paragraph Number
- D. Page Number
- E. Text of passage related to question
- F. Question

Submissions that deviate from this format may not be accepted or addressed.

Note: Questions or other written requests for clarification must be received by the sole point of contact by the deadline set forth in **Section 3.1**. However, DFPS, at its sole discretion, may respond to questions or other written requests received after the deadline. Please provide entity name, address, phone number, email address, and name of contact person when submitting questions.

3.4.4 Clarification Request Made by Applicant

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

3.4.5 Responses

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

3.4.6 Applicant Webinar

DFPS will conduct an **optional** pre-submittal Applicant webinar on November 12, 2020 at 11:00am Central Time. Applicants may register for this optional webinar here

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1848346526986253583>.

3.5 GRANT APPLICATION COMPOSITION

All Applications must be:

1. Clearly legible;
2. Sequentially page-numbered and include the Applicant's name at the top of each page;
3. Organized in the sequence outlined in Article IX - Submission Checklist;
4. In Arial or Times New Roman font, size 11 or larger for normal text, no less than size 10 for tables, graphs, and appendices;
5. Blank forms provided in the Attachments must be used (electronic reproduction of the forms is acceptable; however, all forms must be identical to the original form(s) provided); do not change the font used on forms provided;
6. Correctly identified with the RFA number and submittal deadline;
7. Responsive to all RFA requirements; and
8. Signed by an authorized official in each place a signature is needed.

3.6 GRANT APPLICATION SUBMISSION AND DELIVERY

3.6.1 Deadline

Grant Applications must be received at the address in **Section 3.6.3** and time-stamped by HHS no later than the date and time specified in **Section 3.1**.

3.6.2 Labeling

Grant Applications shall be clearly labeled as follows:

RFA NO.: **HHS0008553**

RFA NAME: **DFPS HOPES GRANT APPLICATION**

GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE: **January 29, 2021 10:30am Central Time**

ATTN: **Jennifer Kim**

HHS will not be held responsible for any Grant Application that is mishandled prior to receipt by HHS. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to mark appropriately and deliver the Grant Application to HHS by the specified date and time.

3.6.3 Delivery

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

1. **Submission Option #1:** Applicant shall submit the following through the Online Bid Room utilizing the procedures in **Exhibit D, HHS Online Bid Room**:
 - a. One file named “Original Application” that contains the Applicant’s entire Application in searchable portable document format (PDF).
 - b. In accordance with **Section 8.1.4**, one file named “Public Information Copy” that contains the Applicant’s entire proposal in searchable PDF, if applicable.
2. **Submission Option #2:** Applicant shall submit the following on two (2) USB drives – One (1) labeled “Original” and One (1) labeled “Copy” – to the correct mailing address that is dependent upon mailing method identified in this section:
 - a. Each USB must contain one file named “Original Application” that contains the Applicant’s entire Application in searchable portable document format (PDF).
 - b. In accordance with **Section 8.1.4**, if applicable, each USB must contain one additional file named “Public Information Copy” that contains the Applicant’s entire Application in searchable PDF.

U.S. Postal Service	Overnight/Express Mail or Hand Delivery
HHSC Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS) Bid Room Attn: Jennifer Kim	HHSC Procurement and Contracting Services (PCS) Bid Room Attn: Jennifer Kim

P.O. Box 149166 Austin, TX 78714-9166	1100 West 49 th Street; Mail Code 2020 Building S Austin, TX 78756
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Note: All Applications become the property of HHSC and DFPS after submission and will not be returned to Applicant. It is the Applicant’s responsibility to appropriately mark and deliver the Application to HHSC by the specified date. A U.S. Postal Service (USPS) postmark; a mail receipt with the date of mailing, stamped by the USPS; a dated shipping label, invoice of receipt from a commercial carrier; or, any other documentation in lieu of the on-site time stamp by submission deadline may not be considered an eligible application under this Grant Opportunity.

3.6.4 Alterations, Modifications, and Withdrawals

Prior to the RFA submission deadline, an Applicant may: (1) withdraw its Grant Application by submitting a written request to the sole point of contact identified in **Section 3.4.1**; or (2) modify its Grant Application by submitting a written Amendment to the sole point of contact identified in **Section 3.4.1**. DFPS may request Grant Application modifications at any time.

ARTICLE IV. GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS

4.1 GENERALLY

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

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

4.2 ELIGIBILITY SCREENING

Applications will be reviewed for minimum qualifications (see **Section 2.3 Eligible Applicants**) and completeness. All complete Applications received by the deadline that meet the minimum qualifications will move to the Evaluation stage.

4.3 EVALUATION

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

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

4.3.1 Specific Selection Criteria

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

1. Applicant's Background and Experience (25%)
2. Needs Assessment and Goals (10%)
3. Project Delivery (45%)
4. Administrative and Financial Capacity (10%)
5. Reasonable Project Cost (10%)

4.4 FINAL SELECTION

After initial screening for eligibility, Application completeness, and scoring of the elements listed in **Section 4.3.1**, a selection committee will look at all eligible Applicants to determine which combination of Applications should be Awarded to most effectively accomplish State priorities. The selection committee will recommend Grant Awards to the DFPS Commissioner, who will make final approvals for awards.

DFPS will make all final funding decisions based on eligibility, geographic distribution, State priorities, reasonableness, availability of funding, cost-effectiveness, and other relevant factors.

4.5 NEGOTIATION AND AWARD

4.5.1 Negotiations

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

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

1. An in-depth discussion of the submitted Application and budget;
2. Requests from DFPS for clarification or additional detail regarding Application; and
3. Requests from DFPS for modifications to Application.

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

4.5.2 Exceptions

Any exceptions to the requirements, terms, conditions, or certifications in the RFA or attachments, Addendums, or revisions to the RFA or Uniform Terms and Conditions, sought by the Applicant must be specifically detailed in writing by the Applicant on **Exhibit F, Exceptions Form**, in this Application and submitted to HHS for consideration. DFPS will accept or reject each proposed exception. DFPS will not consider exceptions submitted separately from the Applicant's Application.

4.5.3 Posting Awards

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

4.6 QUESTIONS OR REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATION BY DFPS

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

ARTICLE V. NARRATIVE APPLICATION

5.1 NARRATIVE APPLICATION

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

5.1.1 Executive Summary

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

5.1.2 Program Narrative

Applicant will complete **Exhibit H, Program Narrative**, attached to this RFA. Applicant will provide a detailed description of the Applicant's background and experience; needs assessment and goals; and program delivery. Application must support all the business activities and requirements described in this RFA. The detailed description must reflect a clear understanding of the work undertaken. Applicant will also include all documents requested as part of completing **Exhibit H, Program Narrative**, to demonstrate fulfilling **Article II** requirements. The Program Narrative should not exceed fifteen (15) pages (excluding attachments.)

5.1.3 PEI Evidence-Based Ranking Tool

Applicant will complete **Exhibit I, PEI Evidence-Based Ranking Tool**, attached to this RFA. Applicants will follow the instructions in completing the tool. All Applicants will complete Section I: Evidence-Based Program Description of the ranking tool for proposed Evidence-Based or Promising Practice Programs. Applicants proposing an Evidence-Based or a Promising Practice Program that has not already been approved by PEI will also complete Section II: Evidence-Based Program Ranking of the ranking tool. Approved

Evidence-Based or Promising Practice Programs are listed in the tool's appendix (starting on p. 10.).

5.1.4 Project Work Plan (PWP)

- A. Applicant will complete **Exhibit J, Project Work Plan**, attached to this RFA. Applicant will describe its plan for service delivery to the eligible service population in the proposed Service Delivery Area to meet all the requirements outlined in **Article II** or describe its proposed planning and readiness activities to be performed.
- B. Applicant will also include all documents requested as part of completing **Exhibit J, Project Work Plan** to demonstrate fulfilling **Article II** requirements.

5.1.5 Subawards

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

ARTICLE VI. REQUIRED APPLICANT INFORMATION

6.1 ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITY INFORMATION

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

6.1.1 Applicant Information

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

6.1.2 Governmental or Non-Profit Information

1. Complete **Exhibit L-1, Governmental Entity Information**, if Applicant is a governmental entity; or
2. Complete **Exhibit L-2, Non-Profit Entity Information**, if Applicant is a non-profit entity.

6.1.3 Grantee Payment Set Up and Direct Deposit Authorization

Use **Exhibit M, Texas Application for Payee Identification Number and Direct Deposit Authorization**, to provide information required for DFPS to establish the Texas Identification Number (TIN) and direct deposit for a Successful Applicant.

6.1.4 Administrative Information

Use **Exhibit N, Administrative Information**, to provide information regarding identification and Contract or grant history of the Applicant, executive management, project management, governing board members, and principal officers. Respond to each request for information or provide the required supplemental documents behind this form. If the response requires multiple pages, identify the supporting pages or documentation with the applicable request.

6.2 LITIGATION AND CONTRACT HISTORY

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

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

Failure to comply with the terms of this provision may disqualify Applicant. Grant Application may be rejected based upon Applicant's prior history with the State of Texas or with any other party that demonstrates, without limitation, unsatisfactory performance, adversarial or contentious demeanor, or significant failure(s) to meet contractual obligations. Provide this information in **Exhibit N, Administrative Information**.

6.3 CONFLICTS

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

Please include any activities of affiliated or parent organizations and individuals who may be assigned to this Grant, if any. Provide this information in **Exhibit N, Administrative Information**.

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

6.4 INTERNAL CONTROLS STRUCTURE QUESTIONNAIRE (ICSQ)

Exhibit O, Internal Controls Structure Questionnaire (ICSQ) for Cost-Reimbursement Grants, including all required attachments must be included in the Application.

6.5 AFFIRMATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Applicant must **execute** and return all the following listed Exhibits:

1. Exhibit A, HHSC and DFPS Affirmations and Grant Opportunity Acceptance;
2. Exhibit O, Internal Controls Structure Questionnaire (ICSQ) for Cost-Reimbursement Grants;
3. Exhibit P, Certification Regarding Lobbying; and
4. Exhibit Q, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs

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

6.6 HUB

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

ARTICLE VII. EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL

7.1 EXPENDITURE PROPOSAL

- A. Attached **Exhibit R, Expenditure Proposal**, of this RFA includes the template for submitting the Cost Estimate. Applicants must complete **Exhibit R, Expenditure Proposal**.
- B. Expenditure Proposal should include the costs of services listed in **Article II, Scope of Grant Award** and shall include all labor, materials, tools, supplies, equipment, and personnel, including, but not limited to, travel expenses, associated costs and incidental costs necessary to provide the products and services according to the minimum specifications, requirements, provisions, terms, and conditions set forth in this RFA.
- C. The Expenditure Proposal shall indicate the necessary expenses for State Fiscal Year 2022 on the proposed budget tab along with a narrative description of the methodology used to calculate the costs.
- D. Applicants must demonstrate that project costs outlined in the Expenditure Proposal are reasonable, allowable, allocable, and developed in accordance with applicable State and federal grant requirements.
- E. Costs will be reviewed for compliance with UGMS and federal Grant guidance found in 2 CFR Part 200, as modified by UGMS, with precedence given to whichever provision imposes the more stringent requirement in the event of a conflict.

ARTICLE VIII. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

8.1 GENERAL CONDITIONS

8.1.1 Amendment

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

8.1.2 Costs Incurred

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

8.1.3 Grant Responsibility

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

8.1.4 Public Information Act

Grant Applications are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (PIA), Texas Government Code Chapter 552, and may be disclosed to the public upon request. Subject to the PIA, certain information may be protected from public release. Applicants who wish to protect portions of the Grant Application from public disclosure should familiarize themselves with this law. Information pertaining to the RFA will be withheld or released only in accordance with the PIA.

Amendments to the PIA passed during the 86th Legislative Session, specifically make “contracting information” public information that must be disclosed in response to a public information request unless otherwise excepted by the Act. Tex. Gov’t Code §§ 552.003(7), 552.0222.

In addition, pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 2261.253(a), DFPS is required to post executed Grant Agreements and the associated RFA documents on the agency website. Grant Agreement documents posted to the web may include the Grant Application of any Applicant receiving a Grant.

DFPS does not have authority to agree that any information submitted will not be subject to disclosure. Disclosure is governed by the PIA. 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. If it is necessary for Applicant to include proprietary or Confidential Information (which may include, but is not limited to, trade secrets or privileged information), Applicant must clearly mark in bold red letters the term “CONFIDENTIAL” using at least 14-point font, on that specific part or page of the submittal which Applicant believes to be confidential. All submittals and parts of submittals that are not marked confidential will be automatically considered to be public information. Should trade secrets or proprietary or otherwise Confidential Information be included in the submitted electronic copy, the content should be marked in the same manner as the original as stated above. In addition, Applicant should mark the medium with the word “Confidential.” If DFPS receives a public information request seeking information marked by Applicant as confidential, the Applicant will receive notice of the request as required by the Texas Public Information Act.

If DFPS receives a public information request for submittals and parts of submittals that are not marked confidential, the information will be disclosed to the public as required by the Texas Public Information Act. Note that pricing is not generally considered confidential under the Texas Public Information Act. Making a blanket claim that the entire Grant Application is protected from disclosure because it contains any amount of proprietary or Confidential Information is not acceptable and may make the entire Grant Application subject to release under the PIA.

8.1.5 News Releases

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

8.1.6 Additional Information

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

8.1.7 DFPS Terms and Conditions

Applicant agrees to comply with **Exhibit B, DFPS Grant Uniform Terms and Conditions**, and **Exhibit C, DFPS Grant Supplemental and Special Conditions**. Any terms and conditions attached to a Grant Application will not be considered unless specifically referred to in the Grant Application.

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ARTICLE IX. SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

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

Original Grant Application Package

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

1. Administrative Information (Exhibit K-N) (Section 6.1-6.4)

- a. Exhibit K, Applicant Information (Section 6.1.1) _____
- b. Exhibit L-1, Governmental Entity Information (Section 6.1.2); or _____
- c. Exhibit L-2, Non-Profit Entity Information (Section 6.1.2) _____
- d. Exhibit M, Texas Application for Payee Identification Number
and Direct Deposit Authorization (Section 6.1.3) _____
- a. Exhibit N, Administrative Information (Sections 6.1.4, 6.2 and 6.3) _____

2. Narrative Application Forms (Exhibit G through J) (Section 5.1)

- a. Exhibit G, Executive Summary _____
- b. Exhibit H, Program Narrative _____
- c. Exhibit I, PEI Evidence-Based Ranking Tool, (if applicable) _____
- d. Exhibit J, Project Work Plan _____

3. Expenditure Proposal (template included) (Article VII)

- a. Exhibit R, Expenditure Proposal _____

4. Applicable Exhibits (to be included in RFA Package) (Section 4.5.2 and Section 6.5)

- a. Exhibit A, HHSC and DFPS Affirmations and Grant Opportunity
Acceptance _____
- b. Exhibit F, Exceptions Form (if applicable) _____
- c. Exhibit O, Internal Controls Structure Questionnaire (ICSQ) for Cost-
Reimbursement Grants (Section 6.4) _____
- d. Exhibit P, Certification Regarding Lobbying _____
- e. Exhibit Q, Assurances – Non-Construction Programs _____

ARTICLE X. EXHIBITS

Exhibit A, HHSC and DFPS Affirmations and Grant Opportunity Acceptance
Exhibit B, DFPS Grant Uniform Terms and Conditions
Exhibit C, DFPS Grant Supplemental and Special Conditions
Exhibit D, HHS Online Bid Room
Exhibit E, Evaluation Score Tool
Exhibit F, Exceptions Form
Exhibit G, Executive Summary
Exhibit H, Program Narrative
Exhibit I, PEI Evidence-Based Ranking Tool
Exhibit J, Project Work Plan
Exhibit K, Applicant Information
Exhibit L-1, Governmental Entity Information
Exhibit L-2, Non-Profit Entity Information
Exhibit M, Texas Application for Payee Identification Number and Direct Deposit Authorization
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