

Hand Delivered, Courier or Overnight Delivery applications are accepted during the normal working hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, on or prior to the established closing date at: Program Announcement: ACYF/HS, Administration for Children and Families, Division of Discretionary Grants, ACF Mailroom, 2nd Floor Loading Dock, Aerospace Center, 901 D Street, SW, Washington, DC 20024.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The ACYF Operations Center, Technical Assistance Team (1-800-351-2293), is available to answer questions regarding application requirements and to refer you to the appropriate contact person in ACYF for programmatic questions.

In order to determine the number of expert reviewers that will be necessary, if you are going to submit an application, please send a post card with or call in the following information: the name, address, and telephone and fax number of the contact person and the name of the organization four weeks prior to the submission deadline date to: Administration on Children, Youth and Families Operations Center, Ellsworth Associates, Inc., 3030 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 240, Arlington, VA 22201, (1-800-351-2293).

If you decide to submit after the notification date, you may still submit a proposal.

Part I. General Information

A. Table of Contents

This announcement is divided into four parts, plus appendices:

Part I provides information on the purpose of the local research effort and a discussion of issues particularly relevant to the local research under this announcement.

- A. Table of Contents
- B. Definitions
- C. Purpose
- D. Background
- E. Local Research Studies

Part II contains key information such as eligible applicants, project periods, special conditions and other information.

- A. Statutory Authority
- B. Eligible Applicants
- C. Special Conditions
- D. Cooperative Agreements
- E. Project Duration and Federal Share

Part III presents the criteria upon which the proposals will be reviewed and evaluated.

- A. Criteria
- B. Review Process
- Part IV contains information for preparing the fiscal year 1996 application.

- A. Availability of Forms
- B. Proposal limits
- C. Check List for a Complete Application
- D. Due Date
- E. Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980
- F. Required Notification of State Single Point of Contact

Appendix A contains a list of the Early Head Start grantees.

Appendix B-1 contains the Request for Proposal for contract to conduct the evaluation of Early Head Start as originally published and now funded.

Appendix B-2 contains the tentative measures proposed for the cross-site evaluation.

Appendix C includes the relevant forms necessary for completing the application.

B. Definitions

Research Partner: The initial university or non-profit organization designated in the Early Head Start grantee's proposal or a university or non-profit organization which formed a partnership with an Early Head Start grantee for the purpose of conducting the research under this announcement after the Early Head Start grant was awarded.

Cooperative Agreement: A cooperative agreement is a funding mechanism which allows substantial Federal involvement in the activities undertaken with Federal financial support. Details of the responsibilities, relationships, and governance of the cooperative agreement will be spelled out in the terms and conditions of the award. The specific responsibilities of the Federal staff and grantee staff are tentatively listed in Part II-D and will be agreed upon prior to the award of each cooperative agreement.

C. Purpose

The purpose of this announcement is to invite universities and non-profit organizations who agree to be the research partners of Early Head Start program grantees to submit proposals for competitive Cooperative Agreements to (1) conduct local research studies on issues related to Early Head Start which will enrich and expand the National Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Study and benefit the field, and (2) establish the foundation for a possible longitudinal study of the mediating and moderating influences on the developmental progress of Early Head Start and Head Start children and families.

D. Background

On March 17, 1995, ACF announced the availability of funds on a

competitive basis for Early Head Start Programs. Sixty-eight applicants were successful and became Early Head Start grantees on the effective date of September 30, 1995. (Applicants should be familiar with this document in order to prepare a responsive proposal. Copies of this announcement are available from the Technical Assistance Team at (1-800 351-2293.) Along with the development of the program specifications for Early Head Start, ACYF designed a set of research and evaluation initiatives to establish the efficacy of the Early Head Start program and to contribute new knowledge to the field on factors which influence the developmental progress of low-income infant and toddlers and their families. The plan for the Early Head Start research and evaluation activities is based on the premise that the first set of Early Head Start programs are prototypes of the Early Head Start concept of state-of-the-art services for families with infants and toddlers. They will operate during a period which will almost assuredly see major social reforms and reconfigurations in services including welfare, health and child care. Therefore, the lessons learned and the models that will be developed will shape the direction of services for families with infants and toddlers well into the 21st century. The plan features (1) a dynamic and iterative formative evaluation process, designed to be used in subsequent Early Head Start programs, that will serve as the instrument for continuous program improvement; (2) an impact evaluation to determine whether and under what conditions program prototypes were effective, and (3) an integrated research base consisting of local research studies as well as the cross-site study for generating further hypotheses around a broad array of potential development and service issues and possibilities; and (4) an intended longitudinal study of both Early Head Start and Head Start.

On May 19, 1995, the first phase of the competitive award process for the conduct of the research and evaluation activities was initiated as a Request for Proposal for a national contractor to perform the cross-site evaluation of Early Head Start (Appendix B-1). The contract resulting from the competition for the national contractor was awarded to Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. This announcement is the second phase, in which cooperative agreements will be awarded on a competitive basis to the research partners of Early Head Start grantees to conduct local research studies.