



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

Division of Social Services

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION No. DSS-2026-03

SFY 2025-2026

| | | | |
|---|--|-------|--------------------------|
| Application Deadline | March 7, 2025, 5:00PM EST | | |
| Funding Title | Adoption Promotion Program: Adoption Reinvestment, Adoption Incentive, IV-BI, TANF | | |
| Funding Agency | NC Department of Health and Human Services, US DHHS Administration for Children and Families | | |
| Estimated Funding available | \$2,425,375.00 | | |
| Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance CFDA No. | 93.603 | | |
| RFA issuing Agency | North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services | | |
| RFA Posted | 2/20/2025 | | |
| Period of Performance | 07/1/2025-06/30/2027 | | |
| E-mail Applications and Questions to | Mary Mackins | Email | Mary.mackins@dhhs.nc.gov |

Direct all inquiries to:

NC Department of Health and Human Services

Division of Social Services

Mary Mackins

820 S. Boylan Ave. Raleigh, NC 27603

919-527-6287 or 919-208-8581

Mary.Mackins@dhhs.nc.gov

The Request for Application (RFA) announces the availability of funding based on the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), authorizing legislation and/or the budget. The RFA requests all the pertinent information and requirements for an applicant to assess their eligibility, competency, and interest in the funding opportunity.



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Section A -- Funding Opportunity

1. Purpose of Funding Opportunity

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS), through the Division of Social Services (NC DSS), contracts with private child placing agencies per NCGS 108A-50 & 50.2 to provide adoption promotion services for children that have higher level of needs and/or, larger sibling groups, and/or older youth. N.C.G.S. 108A-50.2 requires that a portion of the funding be available to private child placing agencies for adoption promotion services. The Division of Social Services is seeking to procure services from private child-placing agencies across the seven (7) regions in North Carolina to provide adoption support services through the Adoption Promotion Program (APP) to ensure timely permanence and well-being of adopted children and their families.

2. Background

The mission of NC DSS is to provide family-centered services to children and families to achieve well-being through ensuring self-sufficiency, support, safety and permanency. NC DSS is guided by both federal and state legislation designed to protect children and strengthen safe, stable, nurturing families. The Adoption Promotion Program exists to support adoptive families by providing services necessary for them to make a lifetime commitment to children when children are unable to return to the home of their birth family. The APP Program will be offered across the seven (7) regions of the state.

The Adoption Incentive program was originally created as part of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. The original program authorized the payment of adoption incentive funds to title IV-E agencies that were successful in increasing the number of children adopted from the public foster care system. The amount of the payments to title IV-E agencies was based on increases in the number of children adopted from the foster care system in a year, relative to a baseline number and the number of children adopted with special needs, relative to a baseline number, once a title IV-E agency exceeded its baseline for the total number of adoptions.

The program has been reauthorized and revised several times since then to continue to provide incentives for title IV-E agencies that improve performance in finding permanent homes for children and youth in foster care who are unable to be reunified with their parents. In 2003, the program was amended to include incentives targeted specifically to older children and youth, who are less likely than younger children to be adopted and risk aging out of foster care without achieving permanency. The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-351) again reauthorized and amended the program, updating the base year used to measure increases and introducing an incentive award for title IV-E agencies exceeding their highest ever foster child adoption rate. Under this reauthorization, incentive payments were provided to the extent that a title IV-E agency increased the number of adoptions above the number of adoptions in a base period. Title IV-E agencies were required to spend the incentive award to provide any service to children and families that is allowable under titles IV-B or IV-E of the Act.

3. Scope of Work

Private child placing agencies are issued contractual agreements from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Social Services (DSS) for the provision of services under

the Adoption Promotion Program (APP). APP operates as a "fee for service" program that pays participating private child placing agencies a predetermined amount for specific services completed in the facilitation of an adoption.

The goals of the program are to:

Provide adoption readiness activities to families.

Provide post-placement support to prospective adoptive families.

Provide post-placement support to children to ensure successful adoption.

Assist prospective adoptive families in the completion of the legal process to facilitate adoption.

The Division of Social Services is seeking to procure services from private child-placing agencies across the seven (7) regions in North Carolina to provide adoption support services through the Adoption Promotion Program (APP) to ensure timely permanence and well-being of adopted children and their families.

Below are the services that the private and county agencies agree will be provided by the private agency for this purpose. The services eligible for payment are defined below to provide role clarity.

Adoptive Family Readiness

Adoptive Family Readiness is defined as the work completed by licensing agencies to recruit potential adoptive families and deliver preparatory training that provides the foundational knowledge and skills for parenting children with special needs. Licensing agencies guide prospective families through the decision-making process and evaluate a family's ability to meet the needs of children in foster care. This includes but is not limited to: individual and joint interviews with family members, assessment of strengths and needs through the 12 skills For Successful Foster and Adoptive Parenting, completion and approval of a Pre-Placement Assessment, and additional training as identified and provided by the family's licensing agency through the assessment process.

Family Post Placement Support

Post Placement Support (family) is defined as supportive services provided to the family by the family's licensing agency from the time that a child is placed in the family's home through the time the child's adoption is finalized. These services include but are not limited to: one-on-one consultations with the family, facilitating supportive decision-making, adoption preparation activities, and support and referrals that are specific to the family's needs while ensuring the success of the adoption.

Child Post Placement Support

Post Placement Support (child) is defined as supportive services provided to the child once the child is placed in a home for the purpose of adoption. It is the hands-on social work provided to ensure a child is secure in their placement. This work goes beyond the monthly mandated visits and referral for services required by the county child welfare agency. It includes activities that prepare the child for the next steps in their adoption journey, such as completing their life book or life story. Additionally, when children understand they are not returning home, it may trigger a variety of emotions and behaviors. Working individually with the child through feelings of grief and loss, abandonment, and attachment to support the child in their placement is crucial. This includes but is not limited to: the use of workbooks, teaching techniques from various practice models, and the use of books or drawings to engage the child in conversation about how they are feeling about adoption. This work is typically done by the child's county child welfare agency adoption worker with whom they have a relationship. However, some county child welfare agencies may find that the child placing agency may be better equipped to provide this service. If the county child welfare

agency requests the child placing agency to assist in these activities, the child placing agency will receive payment for this category.

Legal Services

Legal services are defined as the completion of legal paperwork necessary to finalize an adoption. The responsibility of completing the required documentation to facilitate the legal proceedings surrounding an adoption lies with the county child welfare agency. However, if the county child welfare agency requests a private child placing agency to complete **any portion** of the legal paperwork and/or file the adoption, the child placing agency will receive payment for the legal services category.

Additional information about the APP program can be found at [Adoption Promotion Program](#)

4. Eligibility

Applications are invited from private child placing agencies that can provide direct services in accordance with the Adoption Promotion Program policies and procedures. Guidelines and Criteria can be found at [Adoption Promotion Program](#). The applicant must be a non-profit tax-exempt corporation, so designated by the Internal Revenue Service.

Private agencies who apply for the Adoption Promotion RFA shall meet the following preliminary requirements by providing evidence in their applications that they are able to implement this model by:

- A. Demonstrate they have a strong existing relationship or are willing to develop a relationship with County Departments of Social Services
- B. Demonstrate willingness to provide services outlined in Scope of Work: Adoptive Family Readiness, Family Post Placement Support, Child Post Placement Support, and Legal Services.
- C. Sign and enter into agreement (DSS 5113) with County Department of Social Services for predetermined services.
- D. When a private child placing agency and a county child welfare agency partner to finalize an adoption, an Adoption Services Agreement (DSS-5113-Revised) must be developed and signed by both agencies.
- E. Be willing to engage in all meetings and activities, such as quarterly meetings, and provide information on barriers or successes of the program.
- F. Submit appropriate documents for requests for payments by 10th of each month

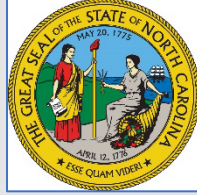
5. Federal Award Information

- | | |
|--|---|
| A. Federal Award Identification Number | 2401NCAIPP-00 |
| B. Federal Award Date | 09/13/2024 |
| C. Federal Award Title | Adoption and Legal Guardianship Incentive Program |
| D. Federal Awarding Agency | US DHHS Administration for Children and Families |
| E. Federal Award Project Description | Adoption Incentive Program |
| F. Total Amount of the Federal Award | 878,463 |
| G. Expected number of Awards | 15-20 awards |
| H. Assistance Listing (formerly CFDA) Name and Number: | 93.603 |
| I. Cost Sharing or Matching | Not applicable |
| J. Allowable Cost | Not applicable |
| K. Indirect Cost | Not applicable |

6. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA)

As an applicant of federal funds, each selected applicant will be required to provide certain information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), including the organization's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. Please see www.sam.gov for free registration.

Additional information about FFATA is available at <https://www.fsr.gov/>.



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Section B-- Application and Submission Specifications

1. Application Content & Format

The RFA and instructions can be obtained by going to <http://www.ncdhhs.gov>. Applications must be typed and presented with the same topic headings and in the same order as set forth in Section C of this RFA. All applications must include a cover page. The cover page shall include:

- A. The applicant's name and address
- B. Title of the Project
- C. Name and contact information of the authorized agency official
- D. The website of the agency (if any)

2. Application Deadline:

Applications must be received no later than 5:00pm EST. March 7, 2025. Applications received after 5:00 p.m. will be classified as late and will not be considered for funding. Email applications directly to State Adoptions Manager at mary.mackins@dhhs.nc.gov with the following information in subject line:

Adoption Promotion RFA: DSS-2026-03/Agency Name

3. Written Questions

All inquiries regarding the funding opportunity must be submitted via email to mary.mackins@dhhs.nc.gov No Later Than 5:00pm, February 27, 2025. The subject line of the email should read "RFA Number DSS-2026-03: Questions / (Name of the vendor)" DSS will post responses to questions by 5:00pm, March 3, 2025. DSS will post responses to <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/about/grant-opportunities/social-services-grant-opportunities>.

4. Who Can Apply

Public or private nonprofit agencies may submit an application for this RFA.

5. Contractual Services

Contractual services for purchases of goods or services may be allowed in order to achieve the goals of the project. Subawards for subrecipients may also be allowed. The budget narrative should include justification for the contractual services or subawards.

6. Application Selection and Scoring

An evaluation/selection committee will review and score all applications received by 5:00 PM on April 18, 2025. Counties will be selected by the Division of Social Services. The Division of Social Services will

ensure that the necessary infrastructure exists within selected counties to fully implement the Adoption Promotion Program.

Scoring chart is provided below:

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| A. Proposal Summary | 10 POINTS |
| B. Organization Background and Qualifications | 10 POINTS |
| C. Need/s Assessment (Problem Statement) | 10 POINTS |
| D. Applicants approach to the problem | 20 POINTS |
| E. Project Narrative | 20 POINTS |
| F. Budget and Narrative | 20 POINTS |
| G. Supporting Documentation | 10 POINTS |
| TOTAL | 100 POINTS |

7. Required Documentation

Upon approval of the application, the following documents will be required:

- A. Proof of Non-Profit Status
- B. Conflict of Interest Policy
- C. Signed State and /or Federal Certifications
- D. Certification of No Overdue Taxes
- E. Documentation of the agency's Unique Entity ID (UEI) number. To register for a UEI number please follow the instructions on the www.SAM.gov website.
- F. Registration with North Carolina electronic Vendor Portal (eVP) <https://evp.nc.gov/>
- G. Upon award, all agencies are required to be registered as a vendor (at no cost) in the NC e-Procurement system. Please visit <https://eprocurement.nc.gov/>, click on Vendor Login and scroll down to "Register". For questions/guidance, please contact the e-Procurement Help Desk at 888-211-7440.

8. Division of Social Services reserves the right to:

- A. Modify the application and budget after consulting with the applicant. Items that may be modified include, but are not limited to goals, costs, performance, and reporting requirements.
- B. Allow or disallow budget amendments during the performance period of the project.
- C. Monitor the program based on the Division's Subrecipient Monitoring plan.
- D. Implement any change or requirement mandated by State or Federal government during the life of the project.

9. Applicant Financial Capacity

Applicants must have the financial capacity to operate without reimbursement for at least 90 days of the project period. Applicant funded through this grant must submit all requests for payment and expenditure reports by the 10th of each month following the month of service.

10. Performance Monitoring

The Division shall monitor any Contracts resulting from this RFA according to the [NC DHHS/DSS Sub recipient Monitoring Plan](#). This includes compliance with federal areas under the [CFR Title 2 Part 200](#). After the review, the Program Consultant will send a formal written monitoring report letter to the Subrecipient's Executive Director and Board Chair which contains recommendations and corrective action findings, if applicable. If the Subrecipient remains in non-compliance status, the contract may be terminated due to failure to meet the terms and conditions of the contract.

11. Risk Management

Audit Requirements:

The Subrecipients will be responsible for meeting the following audit requirements.

- [PART 200—UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS](#)
- [§ 159-34. Annual independent audit; rules and regulations.](#)
- [SUBCHAPTER 03M – UNIFORM ADMINISTRATION OF STATE AWARDS OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE](#)
- [DHHS-58 Program Compliance Supplement](#)

12. Match Requirement

No match requirement.

13. Period of Performance

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2027



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Section C -- Programmatic Requirements

1. Costs

Allocated rates are as follows:

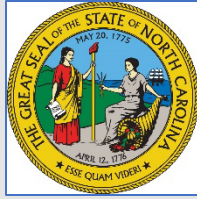
| Service Provided | Children 0-12 Years Old | Teens and Sibling Groups of 3+ |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adoptive Family Readiness | \$4,000 | \$7,000 |
| Post-Placement Support (Family) | \$1,250 | \$2,000 |
| Post-Placement Support (Child) | \$1,250 | \$2,000 |
| Completion of Legal Procedures | \$1,500 | \$2,500 |
| TOTAL PER FAMILY/CHILD | \$8,000 | \$13,500 |

2. Cost Reimbursement

Vendor shall invoice the Division of Social Services for any adoptions finalized the month prior. Along with the invoice, the vendor will provide a monthly Adoption Reporting and Payment Workbook (DSS 5320a). All adoptions must from the prior month must be reported on this form. If no adoptions were completed, the report shall indicate "No Adoptions Completed" for that month. The form will be provided and is to be submitted via email to APP contracts email address: app.contracts@dhhs.nc.gov. The Vendor will provide a separate Adoption Services Agreement (DSS-5113-Revised) for each adoption finalized the month prior. Each Agreement shall reflect the services provided by the private agency and shall be signed by both the private agency and the county agency prior to the filing of the Decree of Adoption. The Contractor shall only be paid for the individual services provided and those which are agreed upon with the county child welfare agency. The form is to be submitted via email to APP contracts email address: app.contracts@dhhs.nc.gov.

3. Program Income

A. \$2,425,375



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Section D – Application Contents and Instructions

Proposal Summary: (page limit: 10)

The summary encompasses all the key points necessary to communicate the objectives of the project.

Proposal Summary must include:

- A. Clearly demonstrate the agency's understanding of the guidelines and criteria for the Adoption Promotion Program.
- B. How the agency will provide services outlined in **Scope of Work** (Section A, page 4)
- C. Clearly demonstrate the agency's willingness to partner with County Department of Social Services to implement and provide services under the Adoption Promotion Program
- D. Clearly describe the agency's plan for providing services and identifying specific examples under each of the identified categories outlined in **Scope of Work** (Section A, page 4)
- E. Clearly demonstrate the agency's willingness to participate in ongoing technical assistance and quarterly meetings.
- F. The number of adoptions completed for children exiting the foster care system by the agency for SFY years: 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024

Organization Background and Qualifications. (Describe the organization and its qualifications for funding) (points)

- A. Mission and goal of the Organization
- B. A brief overview of the history of the organization
- C. A brief overview of the organization's experience with providing the service (organization's past achievements and accomplishments and evidence of its impact)
- D. Brief overview of organization's experience of working with DHHS or other funding agencies including:
 - o The length of the organization receiving Federal or State funding;
 - o The services that the organization provided;
 - o Successes and some challenges.
- E. Qualifications/background on organization's Board of Directors and Key Staff:
 - o Brief bio of all board members and the key staff;
 - o Any criminal convictions of any of the board members and key staff;
 - o Any regulatory sanctions levied against any of the board members and key staff;
 - o Any regulatory investigations pending against of any of the board members and key staff;
Note: The Department may reject a proposal solely on the basis of this information.
 - o Any of the Contractor's directors, partners, proprietors, officers, or employees or any of the proposed project staff that are related to any DHHS employees;
Note: If such relationships exist, identify the related individuals, describe their relationships, and identify their respective employers and positions.
 - o Assurance that the applicant is not debarred or on the suspension of funding list;
 - o Other major funding sources.

Need/s Assessment (Problem Statement) (page limit)

- A. Problem (explain why the service is necessary)
- B. Describe what your organization is doing to address this problem
- C. Primary State/Counties Served
- D. Ethnicity, age, and gender of population served
- E. Target population or who do you plan on serving
- F. Statistical facts and figures (national, state, local)
- G. Program Website

Applicant’s approach to the problem:

Provides an understanding and description of aligning the goals of the funding and the application. This section should also include the methods of achieving the set goals. Goals, objectives, and outcomes of the project shall be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound).

- A. Goals: A goal is something your organization is planning to achieve through this project. A goal should be realistic and measurable.
- B. Objectives: Objectives describe how the goal is going to be achieved. The objectives must be specific, measurable, and achievable in a specified time.
- C. Outcomes: Outcomes reflect what is the expected result at the end of the performance period.

Example of goal, objectives, and an outcome

| Purpose of Funding | Goal | Objectives | Outcome |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Improve literacy skills for children and students from 1-12 grade in North Carolina.</p> | <p>By June 30, 20##, the after-school program will help 200 economically unprivileged children to read at grade level.</p> | <p>By August 31, 20##, test all children’s reading level.</p> <p>By September 30, 20##, identify children who are reading lower than grade level.</p> <p>During October 01, 20## - May 31, 20##, provide individual reading session for 30 minutes every day, provide age appropriate books to the children, and assist in comprehension.</p> <p>By June 30, 20## retest and identify children’s reading levels.</p> | <p>By June 30, 20##, 50% economically challenged children in Dare County will be reading at grade level.</p> |

Project Narrative

Explains the relevance of the project. It details the tasks and/or services that the applicant will provide. Applicant should include information like the implementation plan, schedule, and the desired outcomes.

Budget and Narrative:

Year 1:

| Service Provided | Children 0-12 Years Old | Teens and Sibling Groups of 3+ |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adoptive Family Readiness | \$4,000 | \$7,000 |
| Post-Placement Support (Family) | \$1,250 | \$2,000 |
| Post-Placement Support (Child) | \$1,250 | \$2,000 |
| Completion of Legal Procedures | \$1,500 | \$2,500 |
| TOTAL PER FAMILY/CHILD | \$8,000 | \$13,500 |

Year 2:

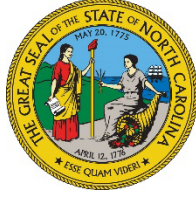
| Service Provided | Children 0-12 Years Old | Teens and Sibling Groups of 3+ |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Adoptive Family Readiness | \$4,000 | \$7,000 |
| Post-Placement Support (Family) | \$1,250 | \$2,000 |
| Post-Placement Support (Child) | \$1,250 | \$2,000 |
| Completion of Legal Procedures | \$1,500 | \$2,500 |
| TOTAL PER FAMILY/CHILD | \$8,000 | \$13,500 |

Supporting Documentation

The applicant has an opportunity to provide more information to help the Division understand the services they are proposing to provide. Some examples of supporting documentation are:

- An organizational chart identifying the personnel who will be assigned to work on this project.
- A description of how the applicant will staff the project, including the name, resume and qualifications of each of the proposed team members.

- Sustainability (Steps taken to ensure future successes or continuing the project beyond the awarded period, e.g., future financial support, staff requirements, continued community contribution).
- Resolution of Challenges: an analysis of the project's risk and limitations, including how these factors will be addressed or minimized (regulatory, environmental, or other constraints).
- Line-Item Budget and Budget Narrative. Every item that appears in the budget should be explained clearly, so the evaluator/ reviewer will understand it. Administrative expenses may not be duplicated as direct and indirect costs.
- Accomplishments of the agency.



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ATTACHMENT A

LINE-ITEM BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE (SAMPLE)

YEAR 1

To be funded:

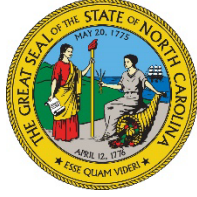
| CATEGORY | ITEM | NARRATIVE | AMOUNT |
|--|------|-----------|--------|
| SALARY/WAGE | | | |
| FRINGE BENEFITS | | | |
| OTHER | | | |
| SUPPLIES MATERIALS | | | |
| EQUIPMENT | | | |
| TRAVEL | | | |
| RENT | | | |
| UTILITIES | | | |
| ADVERTISING | | | |
| DUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS | | | |
| STAFF DEVELOPMENT | | | |
| PROFESSIONAL SERVICES | | | |
| CONTRACTUAL SERVICES | | | |
| INDIRECT COST/ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE | | | |
| CONTRACT VALUE | | | |

Contractor match, if applicable:

| CATEGORY | ITEM | NARRATIVE | AMOUNT |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| CONTRACTOR MATCH | STAFF SALARIES AND FRINGE | IN KIND | |
| MATCH | | | |

SUBTOTAL CONTRACT VALUE YR 1: _____

(Add match, if applicable and contract value)



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LINE-ITEM BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE (SAMPLE)

YEAR 2

To be funded:

| CATEGORY | ITEM | NARRATIVE | AMOUNT |
|--|------|-----------|--------|
| SALARY/WAGE | | | |
| FRINGE BENEFITS | | | |
| OTHER | | | |
| SUPPLIES MATERIALS | | | |
| EQUIPMENT | | | |
| TRAVEL | | | |
| RENT | | | |
| UTILITIES | | | |
| ADVERTISING | | | |
| DUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS | | | |
| STAFF DEVELOPMENT | | | |
| PROFESSIONAL SERVICES | | | |
| CONTRACTUAL SERVICES | | | |
| INDIRECT COST/ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE | | | |
| CONTRACT VALUE | | | |

Contractor match, if applicable:

| CATEGORY | ITEM | NARRATIVE | AMOUNT |
|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| CONTRACTOR MATCH | STAFF SALARIES AND FRINGE | IN KIND | |
| | | | |
| MATCH | | | |

SUBTOTAL CONTRACT VALUE YR 2: _____

TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE YR 1 & 2: _____