

State of Illinois Uniform Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Summary Information

Awarding Agency Name	Human Services
Agency Contact	Charles Hopkins (Charles.Hopkins@ilinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	26-444-80-1252
Funding Opportunity Title	HCD Special Project Contracts
CSFA Number	444-80-1252
CSFA Popular Name	Tax Assistance Program
Anticipated Number of Awards	2
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$550,000
Award Range	\$225000 - \$550000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	No
Indirect Costs Allowed	Yes
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	03/19/2025
Application Date Range	03/19/2025 - 04/21/2025 : 11:59 pm
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=171214
Technical Assistance Session	No

TANF HCD Special Project Contracts, 26-444-80-1252

1. Basic Information (CSFA Data Section)

i. Required Information:

- A. Awarding Agency Name
- B. Funding Opportunity Title
- C. Announcement Type
- D. Funding Opportunity Number
- E. Assistance Listing Number(s)

Items A through E are included in the CSFA Data Table below. ***(Please complete all the fields in the table)***

Awarding Agency Name	Illinois Department of Human Services
Agency Division Name	Family and Community Services Office of Workforce Development Bureau of Employment and Training
Agency Contact	Charles Hopkins DHS.ETNOFO@Illinois.gov (217) 299-8295
Announcement Type	Competitive Renewal
Funding Opportunity Title	<i>TANF HCD Special Project Contracts</i>
Funding Opportunity Number	23-444-80-1252-01
Application Posting Date	March 19, 2025
Application Closing Date	April 21, 2025
Catalog of State Financial Assistance (CSFA) Number	444-80-1252
Catalog of State Financial Assistance (CSFA) Name	HCD Special Project Contracts
Assistance Listing Number(s) (Federal)	93.558
Awarding Source	State
Estimated Total Program Funding Amount	\$ 550,000.00
Anticipated Number of Awards	Up to 2
Award Range	Up to \$ 550,000.00
Cost Sharing/Matching Requirement?	No
Indirect Costs Allowed?	Yes
Restrictions on Indirect Costs?	Yes

Technical Assistance Session Offered	No
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F. Funding Details

1. Total Amount of Funding
 - a. The Department expects to award approximately \$550,000.00
 - b. The source of funding for this program is State funds.
2. Number of Grant Awards
 - a. The Department anticipates funding approximately 2 grant awards to provide this program.
3. Expected Dollar Amount of Individual Grant Awards
 - a. The Department anticipates that the dollar amount of individual awards will be \$225,000.00 - \$550,000.00.
4. Average Amount of Funding per Grant Award in previous years.
 - a. Average funding amount for this grant award program in previous years was \$500,000.00.
5. Renewal or Supplementation of Existing Projects Eligibility
 - a. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new State awards.
 - b. Successful applicants under this NOFO may be eligible to receive two subsequent one-year grant renewals for this program. Renewals are at the discretion of the Department and are based on sufficient appropriation and performance criteria including, but not limited to:
 - i. Grantee has performed satisfactorily during the previous reporting period.
 - ii. All required reports have been submitted on time, unless a written exception has been provided by the Division/Department.
 - iii. No outstanding issues are present (e.g., in good standing with all pre-qualification requirements and no outstanding corrective action, etc.)
6. Sub-Recipient Agreements
 - a. Sub-Recipient Agreement(s) and budgets must be pre-approved by the Department and on file with the Department. Sub-Recipients are subject to all provisions of this Agreement. The successful applicant Agency shall retain sole responsibility for the performance and monitoring of the sub-recipient.
7. Funding restrictions
 - a. Pre-Award Costs
 - i. Pre-Award Costs are allowed subject to the discretion, review, and prior approval of the IDHS Budget Committee. Pre-Award Costs must be identified as such in the IDHS Uniform Grant Budget Narrative. Pre-Award costs are not allowable for this award.
 - ii. IDHS grants are governed by 2 CFR. Part 200, Subpart E-Cost Principles. Principles and 30 ILCS 708 which include information on allowable costs, audit requirements, and financial records.
 - b. [Indirect Costs](#)

- i. Indirect Costs may be applied to this grant award. Indirect Cost rates must be approved through the Illinois Indirect Cost Rate Election System (ICRES).
- 8. The release of this NOFO does not obligate the Illinois Department of Human Services to make an award.
- G. Key Dates
 - 1. Application Posting Date : March 19, 2025.
 - 2. The Department must receive the Preliminary Submission materials (Letter of Intent, etc.):
Due on Not applicable.
 - 3. The Department must receive the Full Application: Due on April 21, 2025 at 11:59 PM CST.
 - 4. Anticipated Award Date: May 15, 2025.
 - 5. Anticipated Start Dates and Periods of Performance for new grant awards.
 - a. Subject to appropriation, the grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2025 and will continue through June 30, 2027.
- H. Executive Summary: This program provides free tax preparation services to Illinois Department of Human Service customers and other low-income individuals for the public good. Along with free tax preparation services, customers will receive an education around tax credits such as the State and Federal Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC). This program is expected to provide free tax preparation services to 12,000 taxpayers with income below 200% of the federal poverty level.
- I. Agency Contact Information.
 - 1. If you have questions about this NOFO, please contact the E&T NOFO mailbox at DHS.ETNOFO@Illinois.gov.
 - 2. A frequently asked Question and Answer page is posted on the DHS website. Questions submitted up to 5 business days prior to the end of the NOFO posting period, will be posted on the website.
- J. Indirect Costs (for more information, refer to [Indirect Costs](#))

- ii. Additional Information: ***(This section is optional. If you choose not to include any additional information, delete this section.)***
 - A. The amount of funding per award, on average, experienced in previous years. ***(This is asked above so you do not have to include this here.)***
 - B. This is a *new program* *one-time initiative* *legacy (established) program*. **(Choose all that apply and delete non applicable options.)**

2. Eligibility

- i. Eligible Applicants.
 - A. The specific types of applicants that may apply for the grant award are: private, not-for-profit community-based organizations that are incorporated and have been granted 501C(3) status, public community- based organizations, including units of local government.

- B. The applicant must meet the Registration, [Pre-qualification and any other Mandatory Requirements](#) listed in this funding opportunity.
1. Applicants must provide the following information via the Grantee Portal annually to be registered with the State of Illinois as an awardee:
 - a. Organization name and contact information
 - b. Federal Employee Identification Number (FEIN)
 - c. Unique Identity Number (UEI)
 - d. Organization type
 2. Applicants must be prequalified; therefore, applications from entities that have not prequalified *prior to and on the due date of this application* will NOT be reviewed and will NOT be considered for funding. Items a) through e) below are the prequalification requirements.
 - a. Unique Entity Identifiers and SAM Registration: Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:
 - i. Be registered in [Sam.gov](#) before the application due date.
 - ii. Provide a valid unique entity identifier (UEI) in its application.
 - iii. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration by the awarding agency.
 - iv. The State Agency may not make an award until applicant has fully complied to all UEI and SAM requirements.
 - v. The State Agency may determine that an applicant is not qualified if they have not complied to requirements and use that determination as a basis to award another applicant or applicants.
 - b. Must be in "good standing" with the Illinois Secretary of State if the Illinois Secretary of State requires the entity's organization type to be registered.
 - c. Must not be on the Illinois Stop Payment List
 - d. Must not be on the [Sam.gov](#) Exclusion List
 - e. Must not be on the [Medicaid Sanctions List](#) (DHFS Provider Sanctions List)
 3. Additional Mandatory Requirements
 - a. Applicants should be able to:
 - i. Demonstrate the ability to begin services immediately upon execution of the uniform grant agreement.

- ii. Demonstrate strong connections with local or regional organizations, companies and public community spaces to do volunteer recruitment and customer recruitment, and locations for public events for tax preparation.
 - iii. Demonstrate strong community ties and capacity for volunteer recruitment and customer recruitment. (Refer to "Capacity" section in program narrative.)
 - iv. Have demonstrated compliance with IDHS performance, financial and reporting standards. (Refer to "Capacity" section in program narrative).
 - v. Applicants should be located in or plan to offer services within community areas with high rates of poverty and unemployment. (Refer to "Needs" section in the Program Narrative)
 - vi. The applicant must have a minimum of 5 (five) years of experience providing tax preparation assistance and income tax preparation training services.
- C. Eligibility factors for the principal investigator or project director:
 - 1. N/A
- D. Successful Applicants will not receive an award if [pre-award requirements](#) are not met. Qualified status is re-verified nightly. If the entity's status changes, an email notice is sent to the designated entity representative with a link to the Grantee Portal.
- E. See Section number I(F) for funding restrictions, if applicable.
- F. Other factors that would disqualify an applicant or application include:
 - 1. N/A
- G. Limit on number of applications.
 - 1. 1 per organization

ii. Cost Sharing:

- A. Providers are not required to participate in cost sharing or provide match.

3. Program Description

This section contains the full program description of the funding opportunity.

i. Required Information

- A. The general purpose of the funding is to provide free tax preparation services to Illinois Department of Human Service customers and other low-income individuals for the public good. Along with free tax preparation services, customers will receive an education around tax credits such as the State and Federal Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC). This program is expected to provide free tax preparation services to 12,000 taxpayers with income below 200% of the federal poverty level.

- B. The State agency's funding priorities or focus areas.
 - 1. IDHS is working to counteract systemic racism and inequity, and to prioritize and maximize diversity throughout its service provision process. This work involves addressing existing institutionalized inequities, aiming to create transformation, and operationalizing equity and racial justice. It also focuses on the creation of a culture of inclusivity for all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or ability.
 - 2. IDHS intends to prioritize applications from eligible applicants who provide services in geographic regions where other services are not offered and/or are in high need areas, having a disproportionate amount of economic hardship or food insecurity.
- C. Goals and objectives of the Program
 - 1. Provide free tax preparation services to at least 12,000 taxpayers statewide with income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) during the contract period July 1 through June 30.
- D. Program Deliverables
 - 1. Meet or exceed the benchmark of providing free tax preparation services to a minimum of 12,000 taxpayers with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level.
 - 2. Education around tax credits and information regarding free tax preparation will be made available to customers via the Tax Help and EITC flyers.
- E. Performance Measures and Standards
 - 1. 100% of completed tax returns are for individuals that are at or below 200% of the FPL;
 - 2. 100% of reports are submitted on time;
 - 3. Services are offered across the state and in various locations.
 - 4. People served reflects the geographic diversity of the state and are not solely clustered in one area.
 - 5. As needed, Corrective Action Plans will be initiated to address unmet Performance Standards, which may result in a reduction or termination of funding.
- F. For cooperative agreements, the "substantial involvement" that the State agency expects to have is (or is located) N/A.
- G. Specific unallowable costs for this program include the following: N/A.
- H. Program beneficiaries or program participants must meet the following requirements: meet the TANF eligibility criteria, i. e. dependent child and under 200% of poverty level.
- I. Authorizing statutes and regulations for the funding opportunity include the following: 305 ILCS 5/Art. IV and 45 CFR 200.

4. Application Contents and Format

This subsection must identify the required content of an application and the forms or formats an applicant must use. If any requirements are stated elsewhere, this section should refer to where those requirements may be found. This section also should include required forms or formats as part of the announcement or state where the applicant may obtain them.

i. Content and Format Requirements

A. Content and Form of Application Submission

1. Pre-applications, letters of intent, or white papers are required.
2. Required Content of Application
 - a. Applications must include the required documents and demonstrate that the program eligibility requirements have been met. The Department will not contact applicants for missing items listed below. Applicants that do not include all the following documents will be considered substantially incomplete and will not be considered for funding. Refer to Section 5 (iii)B for details.
3. Proposal Narrative Content and Attachments
 - a. Program Narrative: IMPORTANT: The program (proposal) narrative makes up the bulk of the application. If the program narrative is missing from your application packet, your application will receive a significantly reduced score and the applicant organization will not meet the criteria to receive a grant under this notice of funding opportunity.
 - b. Proposal Narrative Sections: *Please provide a complete response to the following sections.* If the applicant believes that the subject has been adequately addressed in another part of the application narrative, then provide the cross-reference to the appropriate part of the narrative. If a cross-reference is not included in the section, the reviewer will only consider content contained within that specific section.***(Include program specific instructions/questions for the narrative portion of the application here; at a minimum, each nofo must include a section for need, capacity and program design.)***
- i. Executive Summary (2-page maximum) - 5 points
 1. The Executive Summary will serve as a stand-alone document for the successful applicant that will be shared with various state-level stakeholders and others requesting a brief overview of the funded project. Therefore, applicants should be concise and direct in their description and provide an overview of the services proposed with these funds and the outcomes that will be achieved.
 2. The description should include:
 - a. Agency history
 - b. A brief overview of the services that will be delivered
 - c. Service area
 - d. Need for the services

- e. Capacity to provide the services and;
 - f. Projected numbers to be served within each program component.
- ii. Need (2 pages maximum) 15 points
 1. The purpose of this section is for the applicant to provide a clear and accurate picture of the need for these services and benefits gained. State and describe the service area, the target population, and the need for services in your community. Information in this section should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:
 2. Identification of service area. Include description and demographics of communities served.
 3. Description of accessibility and availability of services that reflect your client and communities' needs.
 4. Identification of unserved, underserved or inadequately served populations and any special needs in the service area. Explain how they were identified.
 5. Identification of proposed or established partnerships with other agencies providing services to underserved populations. Describe the nature of the partnership, i.e. subawards, Memorandum of Understanding or linkage agreements and highlight collaborative efforts.
 6. Describe current trends or issues, service gaps or unmet needs in the community or target population.
- iii. Capacity (9 pages maximum-attachments do not count toward page maximum) 35 points
 1. The purpose of this section is for the applicant to present an accurate picture of the agency's capacity, qualifications, and ability to provide the program as described in this Funding Notice. Information in this section should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:
 2. Convincing evidence that the applicant agency is capable of carrying out the proposed program, including fiscal, administrative and programmatic ability to manage grant. This should include experience, staffing patterns and qualifications to comply with GATA fiscal and administrative requirements. Highlight any recent changes in policies and procedures to improve fiscal, administrative, or programmatic capacity.
 3. An organizational chart of the applicant organization, showing where the program and its staff will be placed. If subawards will be used, include the relationship with those organizations in the chart. (Label Attachment A).
 4. Identify key staff positions that will be responsible for the program and their qualifications to implement the program deliverables.

5. A description of your agency's current programs and activities relevant to the services described in this NOFO.
 6. Describe the capacity of your program to meet the needs of the target populations you will be serving and respond to emerging community needs. Describe your program's strategy to enhance services to unserved, underserved and inadequately served populations in your service area. At a minimum, staffing and linkage/working agreements or collaborations with community partners that primarily serve these populations and the leadership role played by those representing and serving the underserved populations in question.
 7. Identify service locations, hours of operation, service type and staffing. (Attachment B)
 8. Detail service provision numbers. (Attachment C)
 9. Describe agency oversight by Board of Directors and available resources for fiscal, administrative and programmatic areas.
 10. Describe the agency capacity to provide a welcoming, accessible and inclusive environment. a) the means by which the grantee will provide meaningful access for limited English proficient individuals. b) the means by which the grantee will provide meaningful access and effective communication for individuals with disabilities
- iv. Quality (9 pages maximum) 35 points
1. Provide an overview of service delivery model or standards for providing employment and training services.
 2. Provide a description of each required service component in the selected grant type. Include process for initiating services, eligibility criteria, identification of service needs and service planning.
 3. Describe how the program design has direct correlation to the needs identified in the needs section of the application. Include how your program provides culturally appropriate and/or linguistic services, staffing, materials, outreach. Include identification of the underserved populations that are being targeted for outreach and services
 4. Describe how the program provides with transportation assistance.
 5. Describe what resources and other knowledge, skills, or abilities are available to implement quality programming.
 6. Describe your program staff's qualifications and training. Include education and/or experience, initial and ongoing training, staff supervision, training budget, certifications.
 7. Describe how your program will achieve the targeted performance standards. List any additional outcomes your program will target to achieve.

4. Budget and Budget Narrative (10 points)

- a. Applicants must enter a budget electronically in the CSA system (Refer to [IDHS: CSA Tracking System](#).) The Budget entered into the CSA system will include a narrative or detailed description/justification for each line in the budget and will describe why each expenditure is necessary for program implementation and how you arrived at the particular amount. Please include cost allocations as necessary. This narrative must also clearly identify indirect costs, direct program costs, direct administrative costs, and match within each line item as appropriate. The Budget (including MTDC base exclusions as appropriate) should clearly describe how the specified resources and personnel have been allocated for the tasks and activities described in your plan.
- b. The Budget must be electronically signed and submitted in the CSA system. The Budget must be signed by the Provider's Chief Executive Officer and/or Chief Financial Officer.
- c. IMPORTANT: Please be sure the budget status in CSA says "GATA Budget signed and submitted to program review." This status will appear after the budget is electronically signed by the agency CEO or CFO and submitted to IDHS. See IDHS CSA Tracking System webpage for additional information on CSA at [IDHS: CSA Tracking System](#)
- d. The budget and narrative must tie fiscal activity to program objectives and deliverables and demonstrate that all proposed costs are:
 - i. Reasonable and necessary
 - ii. Allocable, and
 - iii. Allowable as defined herein and by program regulatory requirements and the Uniform Guidance (2CFR 200), as applicable.

5. Required Forms

- a. The [Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance](#) is a three-page document used to formalize organization's request to apply for funding. The document requires the signature and email address of the organization's authorized representative. This email address will be used for official communication between the Department and the applicant organization for matters regarding this application.
- b. The [Grantee Conflict of Interest Disclosure](#) is a required for all grant award programs. The document requires agencies to identify actual or potential conflicts of interest. The form must be signed by a representative of the organization.
- c. A copy of your current W-9 form.

6. Required Format

- a. The narrative portion must follow the page maximums where prescribed and must be organized in the format outlined or points may be deducted.
- b. The department may determine that an applicant is not qualified if they have not complied to requirements and use that determination as a basis to award to another applicant.

5. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

- i. Address to Request Application Package.
 - A. Actions Needed Prior to Applying:
 - 1. The complete application package (this Notice of Funding Opportunity, including links to required forms) is available through the Illinois Catalog of Financial Assistance and the IDHS Grants Website Page located: [IDHS: Grant Funded Programs](#)
 - 2. Each Applicant must have access to the internet. The Department's website will contain information regarding the NOFO and materials necessary for submission. Questions and answers will also be posted on the Department's website as described in this announcement (section 1 - Alpha section I) It is the responsibility of each applicant to monitor the website and comply with any instructions or requirements related to the NOFO.
- ii. Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov). This subsection must state the requirements for unique entity identifiers and registration in SAM.gov. It must include the following:
 - A. Each applicant must:
 - 1. Be registered in [SAM.gov](#) before submitting its application;
 - 2. Provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and
 - 3. Continue to maintain an active registration in [SAM.gov](#) with current information at all times during which it has an active award or an application or plan under consideration.
 - 4. The Department may not make an award until applicant has fully complied to all UEI and SAM requirements
 - 5. The department may determine that an applicant is not qualified if they have not complied to requirements and use that determination as a basis to award to another applicant.
 - B. If individuals are eligible to apply, they are exempt from this requirement under 2 CFR 25.110(b).
 - C. If the agency exempts any applicants from this requirement under 2 CFR 25.110(c) or (d), a statement to that effect.
- iii. Submission Instructions. This subsection addresses how the applicant will submit the application. It must include the following:
 - A. Actions needed prior to applying:

Applicants must be registered with the State of Illinois and Pre-qualified in the GATA portal prior to applying for Illinois awards. Instructions for creating an account and registering are located at the following link: [Illinois GATA Grantee Portal](#). Additionally, detailed instructions for registration and prequalification requirements, including the expected amount of time for completion are located here: [Grant Applicant Pre-Qualification and Pre-Award Requirements](#)

B. The methods for submitting the application:

1. Applicants must electronically submit the complete application including all required narratives and attachments in the prescribed order:
 - a. Program Narrative
 - b. [Uniform-Application-for-State-Grant-Assistance.pdf](#)
 - c. [Grantee Conflict of Interest Disclosure](#)
 - d. Budget (entered into the CSA system as described in section (4)(A)
 - e. [W-9 form](#)
2. Applications must be sent electronically to DHS.ETNOFO@Illinois.gov. The application will be electronically time-stamped upon receipt. The Department will ONLY accept applications submitted by electronic mail sent to ETNOFO@illinois.gov . Include the following in the subject line: NOFO number and your agency name. Application submissions or delivery to any other email address or contact, including other IDHS offices or employees, will not be considered for review or funding. Applications will not be accepted if received by fax machine, hard copy, disk, or thumb drive.
3. Documents must include the following password: N/A.
4. Software or electronic capabilities required are as follows: internet access, preferably high-speed, and browser software meeting the following criteria: Google Chrome, Edge, Firefox or Internet Explorer 11 or newer.
5. Applicants are required to notify the Department within 48 hours of the deadline if they did not receive an email notifying them that their application was received. If the applicant does not receive an email and does not notify the Department within 48 hours, their application will be considered a late submission and will NOT be reviewed or scored. The applicant will NOT have the right to protest the submission/receipt of their application to the Department after the 48 hours. In the event of a dispute the applicant bears the burden of proof that the application was received on time at the email location listed above (and that the budget was submitted into the CSA system on time).

C. Pre-application materials must be submitted as follows: N/A.

D. If you are experiencing system problems or technical difficulties submitting your application, you may contact:

1. Name: Charles Hopkins
2. Phone: (217) 299-8295
3. Email: DHS.ETNOFO@Illinois.gov

iv. Submission Dates and Times.

- A. Full applications are due on the following date, April 21, 2025 at the following time 11:59 PM (CST).

- B. Any preliminary submissions, such as letters of intent, white papers, or pre- applications are due on the following date N/A at the following time N/A (CST).
- C. Other submissions required before the award (separate from the full application) include: N/A.
- D. ***(If the funding opportunity is a general announcement that is open for a period of time with no specific due dates for applications, this section should say so.)***
- E. Missed Deadlines:
 - 1. Applications received after the due date and time will not be considered for review or funding. All applicants/applications determined to be non-compliant or otherwise determined to be disqualified from consideration will be separately notified in writing, by email, upon determination. This email will be sent to the email addresses provided in the application and will identify the reason for disqualification.
 - 2. For your records, please keep a copy of your submission with the date and time the application was submitted along with the email address to which it was sent. The deadline will be strictly enforced.
 - 3. IMPORTANT: It is strongly recommended that the applicant not wait until the last minute to submit an application in case they experience technical difficulties with the submission process. Applicants should keep copies of all documentation that that may prove their application was submitted to the correct location and that it was received by IDHS on or before the deadline. Applicants should also maintain all electronic documentation, including screen shots, email correspondence, help desk ticket numbers, etc. that would document any unforeseen difficulties the applicant may have encountered regarding the timely submission of the application.

v. *Intergovernmental Review.*

- A. This funding opportunity is NOT subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs"

6. Application Review Information.

i. Eligibility Review

- A. Applications that are received will be reviewed on/between April 22, 2025 and April 30, 2025 to ensure they meet the criteria for consideration. Applications that do not meet the criteria in paragraph B below will be rejected and not enter the Merit Review process.
- B. The following are the criteria that must be met for eligibility:
 - 1. Applicant has a current registration with the State of Illinois in the Grantee Portal.
 - 2. Applicant has an active Sam.gov public account.
 - 3. Applicant has an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) with Sam.gov

4. Applicant is in "good standing" with the Secretary of State.
5. Applicant is not on the DHS Stop Payment List Service or the Illinois Stop Payment List.
6. Applicant is not on the [Sam.gov](https://www.sam.gov) Exclusion List.
7. Applicant is not on the Illinois Medicaid Sanctions (DHFS Provider Sanctions) List.
8. Program specific eligibility restrictions include:
 - a. N/A
- C. Restrictions on eligibility for State awards are referenced in 44 Ill Admin Code 7000.70. Program specific eligibility restrictions are referenced in this Notice of Funding Opportunity.
- D. All applicants/applications determined to be non-compliant or otherwise determined to be disqualified from consideration will be notified. This email will be sent to the email addresses provided in the application and will identify the reason for disqualification.

ii. Review Criteria

A. Review Criteria

1. Evaluation criteria is based upon requirements set forth in 44 Ill Admin Code 7000.350 Merit Review of Applications and the IDHS Merit Review Manual. The review criteria and sub-criteria include the following:
 - a. Applications will be evaluated based applicant's response to the program narrative described in Section 4.i.3 Program Narrative and Contents. Each section will be weighted as described below.
2. Criteria and Weighting of each criterion
 - a. Executive Summary - 5 points
 - b. Description of Need - 15 points
 - c. Agency Qualifications / Organizational Capacity - 35 points
 - d. Quality - Description of Program Design and Services - 35 points
 - e. Budget and Budget Narrative – 10 points
3. Statutory, regulatory, or other preferences
 - a. Start Date: Applicants must be in a position to begin offering services on July 1, 2025.
 - b. Technology: Agencies awarded funds through this funding notice should have a computer that meets the following minimum specifications for the purpose of utilizing any required IDHS web-based reporting system and the receipt/submission of electronic program and fiscal information:
 - i. Internet access, preferably high-speed
 - ii. Browser software meeting the following criteria: Google Chrome, Edge, Firefox or Internet Explorer 11 or newer
 - iii. Email capability
 - iv. Microsoft Excel

- v. Microsoft Word
 - vi. Adobe Reader
 - vii. Printer/scanner
 - c. Site Visits: The applicant agrees to participate in site visits/quality reviews as requested by the Department.
 - d. Emergency Policies and Procedures: Provider organizations shall have written emergency (including pandemic) policies and procedures that align with current guidelines put forth by the local Health Department, the Illinois Department of Public Health and/or the Center for Disease Control.
 - e. Hiring and Employment Policy: It is the policy of the Department to encourage cultural diversity in the work environment and to promote employment opportunities through its programs. The Department philosophy is that the program workforce should appropriately reflect the populations to be served, with special attention given to hiring individuals indigenous to those communities. Consistent with Department policy, whenever a position becomes available, funded programs are encouraged to consider TANF clients for employment, contingent upon their qualifications in the areas of education and work experience.
 - f. Publication of Studies, Reports or other Program Products: The applicant agrees that products produced for the Department under this award, including, but not limited to research reports, data, analyses, and policy recommendations are the property of the Department and will not be published or distributed except as prescribed by the Department.
 - g. Trauma Informed: The provider may demonstrate an ongoing commitment to developing/maintaining trauma informed capacity within the organization as this is a best practice emerging in Human Services. The provider can demonstrate this commitment by providing upon request, a list of trauma-informed trainings attended by staff, copies of trauma-informed policies, practices and procedures adopted by the organization, documentation of trauma-informed technical assistance received, etc.
 - h. Equity and Racial Justice: Services provided under this NOFO must reflect IDHS' commitment to advance equity and racial justice by enabling all to thrive, regardless of race, zip code, and ability. This includes but is not limited to having leadership (board and/or executive staff) that is reflective of the community/population being served. If no equity and racial justice efforts are currently being pursued, the organization can indicate their intention to develop and implement, including a timeline of activities.
4. Cost Sharing *will not be* considered in the review process.
5. Information regarding Applicant-nominated reviewers:
- a. N/A
- B. Additional Information
- 1. Merit Reviewers
 - a. Agency personnel will be selected from positions knowledgeable in program policy, implementation, program history, and/or contract awards.

2. The number of people on an evaluation panel and how it operates, how reviewers are selected, reviewer qualifications, and how conflicts of interest are avoided.
 - a. Evaluation of the application will be done by a review team comprised of up to 3 individuals.

iii. ***Review and Selection Process.***

- A. The process for evaluation of the application is as follows:
 1. Applications will be reviewed by a panel of up to 3 individuals selected from agency personnel. Reviewers will independently score applications then submit scoring to Agency Leadership. Reviewers may also convene to discuss application contents during review.
- B. The numerical score may not be the sole award criterion. The Department reserves the right to consider any factors such as: geographical distribution, demonstrated need, and agency past performance as a State of Illinois grantee, etc. While the recommendation of the review panel will be a key factor in the funding decision the Department maintains final authority over funding decisions and considers the findings of the reviewers to be non-binding recommendations. Any internal documentation used in scoring or awarding of grants shall not be considered public information.
- C. In the event of a tie with insufficient funding for all tied applications, the Department may choose to elect one or more of the following options:
 1. Apply one or more of the additional factors for consideration described above to prioritize the applications; or
 2. Partially fund each of the tied applications; or
 3. Not fund any of the tied applications. The Department reserves the right to negotiate with successful applicants to adjust award amounts, targets, deliverables, etc.
- D. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates: on or before May 15, 2025
- E. Merit Based Review Appeal Process
 1. Competitive grant appeals are limited to the evaluation process. Evaluation scores may not be protested. Only the evaluation process is subject to appeal and shall be reviewed by IDHS' Appeal Review Officer (ARO).
 - a. Submission of Appeal
 - i. Appeals submission IDHS contact information:
 1. Contact Name: Charles Hopkins
 2. Email address: DHS.ETNOFO@Illinois.gov
 3. Email Subject Line: FY26 NOFO – HCD Special Project -Tax Prep (26-444-80-1252) Appeal
 - ii. An appeal must be submitted in writing to appeals submission IDHS contact listed above, who will send to the IDHS Appeal Review Officer (ARO) for consideration.
 - iii. An appeal must be received within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published.

- iv. The written appeal shall include at a minimum the following:
 - 1. Name and address of the appealing party
 - 2. Identification of the grant; and
 - 3. Statement of the reasons for the appeal
 - 4. Supporting documentation, if applicable
- b. Response to appeal
 - i. IDHS will acknowledge receipt of an appeal within 14 calendar days from the date the appeal was received.
 - 1. IDHS will respond to the appeal within 60 days or supply a written explanation to the appealing party as to why additional time is required.
 - 2. The appealing party must supply any additional information requested by IDHS within the time period set in the request
- c. Resolution
 - i. The ARO will make a recommendation to the Agency Head or designee as expeditiously as possible after receiving all relevant, requested information.
 - ii. In determining the appropriate recommendation, the ARO shall consider the integrity of the competitive grant process and the impact of the recommendation on the State Agency.
 - iii. The Agency will resolve the appeal by means of written determination.
 - iv. The determination shall include, but not be limited to:
 - v. Review of the appeal;
 - vi. Appeal determination; and
 - vii. Rationale for the determination.

iv. Risk Review

A. Requirements:

- 1. IDHS conducts risk assessments for all awardees, prior to the award being issued.
 - a. An agency wide Internal Control Questionnaire (ICQ) to be completed by the awardee within the Grantee Portal. The ICQ evaluates fiscal, administrative, and programmatic risk in the following categories:
 - i. Quality of Management Systems
 - ii. Financial and Programmatic Reporting
 - iii. Ability to Effectively Implement Award Requirements
 - iv. Awardee Audits
 - b. A program specific Programmatic Risk Assessment conducted by the awarding agency to evaluate the following categories:
 - i. Programmatic financial stability
 - ii. Management systems and standards that would affect the program.
 - iii. Programmatic audit and monitoring findings
 - iv. Ability to effectively implement program requirements.
 - v. External partnerships
 - vi. Programmatic reporting

- c. Risk assessments are not intended to be punitive in nature, rather they are conducted in order to evaluate the support, technical assistance, and training that may be needed for the awardee and the level of monitoring that is needed for the award.
 - d. Risk assessments may result in Specific Conditions being placed on the award to include more frequent monitoring or the implementation of a corrective action plan.
- 2. Simplified Acquisition Threshold - Federal and State awards
 - a. This award is not anticipated to exceed the Simplified Acquisition Threshold defined in 48 CFR part 2, subpart 2.1 (OR)
 - b. It is anticipated that grants under this award may receive award over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold define in 48 CFR part2, subpart 2.1. Potential grantees under this funding announcement may receive an award in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold. Therefore, the grantee is subject to the simplified acquisition threshold and related requirements.
 - i. Prior to making an award with a total amount greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, IDHS is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. (Currently FAPIIS) (See 41 U.S.C. 2313)
 - ii. That an applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a State or Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through Sam.
 - iii. IDHS will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicants' integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under State and Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR 200.206

7. Award Notices

- i. This section addresses what a successful applicant can expect to receive following selection.
 - A. State Award Notices
 - 1. Applicants recommended for funding under this NOFO following the review and selection process will receive a Notice of State Award (NOSA). The NOSA shall include:
 - a. Grant award amount
 - b. The terms and conditions of the award
 - c. Specific conditions, if any, assigned to the applicant based on the fiscal and administrative risk assessment (ICQ), programmatic risk assessments (PRA), and the Merit Review.
 - 2. The applicant shall receive the NOSA through the Grantee Portal. The NOSA must be signed by the grants officer (or equivalent). This signature effectively accepts the state award amount and all conditions set forth within the notice. The signed NOSA is the document authorizing the

department to proceed with issuing an agreement. The Agency signed NOSA must be remitted to the Department as instructed in the notice.

3. The notice is not an authorization to begin performance (to the extent that it allows charging to State awards of pre-award costs; pre-award costs are incurred at the non-State entities own risk unless they have received written prior approval to begin performance).
4. The authorizing document to begin performance is the fully executed Uniform Grant Agreement (UGA) signed by the grants officer, or equivalent. This is the official document that obligates funds. The UGA is sent to the non-State entity via the CSA system. The non-State entity will print and sign the signature page of the UGA and return signature page to DHS.OCA.SignaturePages@illinois.gov. A final signed copy of the UGA will be provided to the non-State entity via an upload into the CSA Tracking system. Note: The Department cannot issue an Agreement until the successful applicant has an approved budget entered into the CSA system.
5. Applicants who are not eligible due to registration or pre-qualification issues, or late applications will receive a Notice of Ineligibility prior to the Merit-Based Review.
6. Applicants who are not selected to receive an award following the Merit Review process will receive a Notice of Denial/Non-Selection.

8. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

- i. Administrative and National Policy Requirements
 - A. The agency awarded funds shall provide services as set forth in the IDHS grant agreement and shall act in accordance with all State and Federal statutes and administrative rules applicable to the provision of the services.
 - B. [Sample of the current IDHS Uniform Grant Agreement](#)
 - C. Payment Terms:
 1. It is the policy of the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) that this policy complies with 2 CFR 200.302, 2 CFR 200.305, 31 CFR 205 (Procedures implementing the Cash Management Improvement Act and Treasury State Agreement (TSA)) and 44 Ill. Admin. Code 7000.120 GOMB Adoption of Supplemental Rules for Grant Payment Methods. Three different award payment methods exist, namely Advance Payment, Reimbursement, and Working Capital Advance.
- ii. Reporting
 - A. Reporting upon execution of the grant agreement shall be in accordance with the requirements set forth in the UGA and related exhibits which include but is not limited to the following:

1. Periodic Financial Reports submitted electronically in accordance with instructions in the UGA no more frequent than quarterly and no less frequent than annually, unless unusual circumstances exist.
2. Periodic Programmatic Reports submitted electronically in accordance with instructions in the UGA no more frequent than quarterly and no less frequent than annually, unless unusual circumstances exist.
 - a. On a monthly basis Provider is expected to submit the following on the Periodic Performance Report (PPR):
 - i. Number of completed tax returns;
 - ii. Number of individuals/households served;
 - iii. Number of volunteers recruited;
 - iv. Number of volunteer training sessions;
 - v. Number of seasonal staff hired and trained;
 - vi. Number of full-time staff hired;
 - vii. Number of sites established;
 - viii. Number of points of contact done for outreach and communication and with who (FCRCs, community organizations, etc.);
 - ix. Staff hired, or volunteers recruited;
 - x. Outreach materials developed;
 - xi. Work done to set up and establish necessary systems, i.e. technology, internet -based tax service portal, etc.
 - b. The grantee is expected to develop and provide a written plan of activities and expenditures for the tax season, which should be submitted to the Department by August 15th which should include:
 - i. An update for the TaxHelp and EITC flyers;
 - ii. A listing of established sites and locations;
 - iii. The anticipated number of volunteers recruited;
 - iv. The anticipated number of volunteer training sessions scheduled;
 - v. The anticipated number of seasonal staff hired and trained;
 - vi. Any planned meetings with local FCRC's or community agencies;
 - vii. And other relevant details not outlined here.
3. Close-out Performance Reports and Financial Reports as instructed in the UGA including:
 - a. Total funding received for free tax preparation services for low-income families/individuals (outlining all sources of revenue);
 - b. Number of completed tax returns;
 - c. Number of uncompleted tax returns and reasons for lack of completion;
 - d. Number of individuals/households served;
 - e. Total monetary value of refunds;
 - f. Number of returns for individuals that meet the TANF eligibility criteria, i. e. dependent child and under 200% of poverty level;
 - g. Number of returns for individuals or households receiving SNAP benefits, if known;
 - h. Total number of volunteers recruited;

- i. Total number of volunteer training sessions completed;
 - j. Total number of seasonal staff hired and trained;
 - k. Staffing plan for the year including number of full-time and part-time staff and any changes or challenges faced during the year;
 - l. Number of sites established and delivering services, analysis of varying traffic at various sites; and
 - m. Plans to improve performance the following year based on experiences/learning from the current year.
- 4. Other Unique Programmatic Reporting Requirements: additional annual performance data may be collected as directed by the Department and in the format prescribed by the Department.
 - 5. If the State share of any State award may include more than \$500,000 over the period of performance applicants are also subject to the reporting requirements reflected in Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200. Noncompliance with any of the identified reports may lead to being placed on the Illinois Stop-Payment List

9. Other Information – Optional

- i. Additional Information (***This section MAY include any additional information to help potential applicants. For example, the section could include the following***)
 - A. Mandatory Forms and Submission:
 - 1. [Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance](#)
 - 2. Proposal Narrative
 - 3. Uniform Grant Budget in CSA
 - 4. [Grantee Conflict of Interest Disclosure](#)
 - 5. [W-9 form](#)