

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

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|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Awarding Agency Name | Human Services |
| Agency Contact | Sheena Panoor (sheena.panoor@illinois.gov) |
| Announcement Type | Initial |
| Type of Assistance Instrument | Grant |
| Funding Opportunity Number | 27-444-80-2538 |
| Funding Opportunity Title | SNAP & TANF E&T Training and Technical Assistance |
| CSFA Number | 444-80-2538 |
| CSFA Popular Name | Employment & Training Technical Assistance (ETTA) |
| Anticipated Number of Awards | 1 |
| Estimated Total Program Funding | \$850,000 |
| Award Range | \$250000 - \$850000 |
| Source of Funding | Federal and State |
| Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements | No |
| Indirect Costs Allowed | Yes |
| Restrictions on Indirect Costs | No |
| Posted Date | 06/04/2026 |
| Application Date Range | 06/05/2026 - 07/06/2026 : 11:59 PM |
| Grant Application Link | Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... http://IDHS: SNAP and TANF E&T Training & Technical Assistance (27-444-80-2538-01) |
| Technical Assistance Session | No |

I. Basic Information (CSFA Data Section)

A. Required Information

1. Awarding Agency Name
2. Funding Opportunity Title
3. Announcement Type
4. Funding Opportunity Number
5. Assistance Listing Number

Items 1(A) - 1(E) are in the CSFA Data Table below.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Awarding Agency Name | Illinois Department of Human Services |
| Agency Division Name | Division of Family and Community Services |
| Agency Contact | Sheena Panoor <i>Sheena.Panoor@illinois.gov</i> |
| Announcement Type | Competitive Initial Announcement |
| Funding Opportunity Title | SNAP and TANF Employment and Training and Technical Assistance |
| Funding Opportunity Number | 27-444-80-2538 |
| Application Posting Date | <i>June 4, 2026</i> |
| Application Closing Date | <i>July 6, 2026</i> |
| Catalog of State Financial Assistance (CSFA) Number | 444-80-2538 |
| Catalog of State Financial Assistance (CSFA) Name | SNAP and TANF E&T Training and Technical Assistance |
| Assistance Listing Number(s) | Not applicable |
| Awarding Source | State funds |
| Estimated Total Program Funding Amount | \$850,000 |
| Anticipated Number of Awards | 1 |
| Award Range | \$850,000 |
| Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement | No |
| Indirect Costs Allowed? | Yes |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Restrictions on Indirect Costs? | No |
| Technical Assistance Session Offered | No |

F. Funding Details

1. Total Amount of Funding

- a. The Department expects to award approximately \$850,000 during the 12-month period from July 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027.
- b. The source of funding for this program is state funds.

2. Number of Grant Awards

- a. The Department anticipates funding approximately 1 grant award 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 up to \$850,000.

4. Average amount of Funding per Grant Award on average in previous years.

- a. Average funding amount for this grant award program in previous years was \$350,000.

5. Renewal or Supplementation of Existing Projects Eligibility.

- a. This is not a renewal year.
- 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/are not allowable for this award
- ii. IDHS grants are governed by 2 CFR. Part 200, Subpart E-Cost Principles.
- iii. 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 *June 4, 2026*
2. The Department must receive the Preliminary Submission materials (Letter of Intent, etc.):
3. The Department must receive the Full Application: Due on *July 6, 2026*
4. Anticipated Award Date **TBD**
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, 2026, and will continue through June 30, 2027.

H. Executive Summary

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Division of Family and Community Services, Office of Workforce Development (OWD) is launching a statewide initiative to modernize, strengthen, and expand the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training (E&T) programs. This initiative represents a transformational opportunity for Illinois to build a cohesive, high-performing E&T system capable of serving significantly more participants, with stronger, more consistent, workforce-aligned services that promote long-term economic mobility across all regions of Illinois. Through this award, IDHS seeks a skilled technical assistance partner to strengthen program operations, enhance provider capacity, and build sustainable infrastructure that supports high-quality, data-driven program delivery. The work will improve business processes; update and standardize policies and manuals; modernize referral, intake, and assessment systems; enhance

case management and supportive service coordination; establish clear performance standards and monitoring frameworks; improve data collection and reporting to support continuous improvement; and strengthen alignment with workforce development principles, employer pipelines, and career pathway opportunities.

A central priority is building capacity across program, fiscal, contracting, monitoring, and data functions to deliver consistent E&T oversight, technical assistance, and performance management. The initiative will also strengthen the SNAP E&T intermediary model, increase SNAP E&T legacy provider readiness to transition to the SNAP E&T 50–50 reimbursement model, and recruit additional SNAP and TANF E&T providers in underserved areas to increase geographic reach and service availability.

Over 12 months, the selected partner will deliver three integrated phases of work:

- **Learning and Discovery:** Comprehensive statewide assessment, customer journey mapping, analysis of program operations, and identification of opportunities to strengthen compliance, workforce alignment, and participant experience.
- **Infrastructure:** Development of updated manuals, standardized workflows, operational tools, fiscal guidance, continuous improvement structures, and training systems across functional areas.
- **Strengthening Performance and Accountability:** Implementation of performance standards, dashboards, monitoring protocols, and statewide convenings to reinforce expectations, support consistent service quality, and sustain long-term improvements.

The outcome will be a modernized TANF and SNAP E&T system marked by stronger program capacity, clearer expectations, streamlined processes, expanded provider reach, improved fiscal stewardship, and measurable improvements in participant engagement, employment, earnings, and long-term economic mobility.

I. Agency Contact Information

1. If you have questions about this NOFO, please contact Sheena Panoor, email sheena.panoor@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 Cost Overview](#)

1. An organization must have a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with the State of Illinois, a Federal NICRA, or must elect to use the 15% de minimis rate (some programs funded with federal dollars are still subject to the 10% de minimis rate) to be reimbursed for any

indirect costs within a program. All State of Illinois grantees also have the option to select "no rate" and not claim any indirect costs.

2. Awardees must select an indirect cost election in the Grantee Portal on an annual basis. Note - The election for "no rate" and "de minimis" continues indefinitely once initially selected until a new election is made.
3. All State of Illinois grantees receiving awards from Illinois grant making agencies must substantiate or elect an indirect cost rate for their organization. Grantees that wish to negotiate a rate with the State of Illinois will start their election process in the Grantee Portal and the case will then be sent to the Crowe Resource Management Program (CRMP) to begin negotiation.
4. Please click on the Centralized Indirect Cost Rate System to begin the indirect cost rate election process and obtain access to resources and points of contact to assist your organization in completing this process.

II. Eligibility

- A. The specific types of applicants that may apply for the grant award are:
 1. Non-profit organizations
 2. For-profit organizations
 3. Education and training organizations
 4. Research, evaluation, and policy organizations
 5. Technical assistance and consulting firms
- 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](https://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 with all UEI and SAM requirements.
 - v. The State Agency may determine that an applicant is not qualified if they have not complied with 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](https://sam.gov) Exclusion List
 - e. Must not be on the [Medicaid Sanctions](#) List
3. Additional Mandatory Requirements and Specialized Expertise
- a. Applicants must submit three (3) professional references from state agencies with whom they have worked.
 - b. Applicants must provide a detailed example of prior capacity-building work on TANF and/or SNAP E&T for a state agency that resulted in meaningful and sustained improvements. Refer to **Section IV.A.3.b** for instructions on what the detailed example must include.
- K. Eligibility factors for the principal investigator or project director.
1. The Principal Investigator or Project Director must demonstrate the leadership, technical expertise, and systems-level experience necessary to oversee a complex, statewide TANF E&T and SNAP E&T modernization initiative. Refer to **Section IV.A.3.b** for additional information and instructions on how to demonstrate capacity of Project Director.
 2. Refer to **Section IV.A.3.b** for additional instructions and requirements for the project team.
- L. 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.
- M. See **Section 1.F.7** for funding restrictions, if applicable.

N. Cost Sharing: Providers are not required to participate in cost-sharing or provide match

III. Program Description

A. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), Office of Workforce Development (OWD) seeks to transform and modernize the statewide Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training (E&T) programs through a comprehensive initiative that strengthens program operations, improves provider capacity, expands geographic reach, and enhances the participant experience.

This initiative will integrate workforce development principles, customer experience insights, and federal requirements to create a cohesive, high-performing statewide E&T system capable of delivering consistent and participant-centered services. The work will reduce administrative burden, clarify policies and expectations, strengthen fiscal integrity, and improve the use of data for decision-making.

The initiative also prioritizes business process improvement and capacity-building infrastructure to support programmatic, fiscal, contracting, monitoring, and data operations needed for consistent technical assistance and oversight. At the same time, the project will strengthen provider readiness, expand use of the SNAP E&T intermediary model and 50-50 reimbursement, and support targeted recruitment of providers in underserved areas.

Over 12 months, the selected partner will design and implement three integrated phases:

- **Learning and Discovery:** A comprehensive assessment of program operations, provider performance, compliance, participant experience, workforce alignment, and service gaps.
- **Infrastructure:** Development of standardized workflows, updated policy and operational manuals, fiscal guidance, training systems, quality standards, and tools that support program operations and provider capacity.
- **Strengthening Performance and Accountability:** Implementation of performance metrics, dashboards, monitoring protocols, statewide convenings, and sustainability strategies to reinforce long-term improvements.

The result will be a more effective, modern, and participant-centered TANF and SNAP E&T system with stronger alignment, better provider performance, expanded reach, improved accountability, and measurable gains in participant engagement, employment, earnings, and economic mobility.

B. Goals and objectives of the Program.

1. Enhance Participant Experience and Reduce Barriers

- a. Redesign referral, intake, assessment, and navigation systems to be trauma informed and easier to access.
- b. Identify and reduce operational, technological, and administrative barriers to participation.

2. Strengthen Program Operations
 - a. Build proficiency in E&T program policy, oversight, compliance, data use, and technical assistance.
 - b. Create clear workflows, protocols, and tools that support consistent decision making across functional areas.
 3. Improve Provider Capacity and Expand Geographic Access
 - a. Support TANF E&T and SNAP E&T provider recruitment in underserved areas and expand the SNAP E&T intermediary model.
 - b. Strengthen provider readiness to deliver quality services aligned with workforce development best practices.
 4. Develop Clear, Consistent Policies and Standardized Business Processes
 - a. Update and standardize program manuals, tools, workflows, and decision-making protocols.
 - b. Ensure clarity and consistency across programs while maintaining federal policy and program distinctions.
 5. Strengthen Fiscal Integrity and Sustainable Financing
 - a. Improve provider understanding of cost allocation, documentation, and allowable expenses.
 - b. Build SNAP E&T provider readiness for expanded SNAP E&T 50–50 reimbursement.
 6. Improve Use of Data and Performance Measurement
 - a. Leverage existing data systems to track engagement, outcomes, compliance, and provider performance.
 - b. Develop metrics aligned with provider contracts and program expectations.
 7. Establish Quality Standards and Continuous Improvement Processes
 - a. Implement statewide quality standards, monitoring tools, and continuous improvement structures.
 - b. Build capacity for program managers, program administrators, and providers to support ongoing performance improvement.
- C. Program Deliverables
1. Phase 1: Learning & Discovery (Quarter 1)
 - a. Statewide assessment covering E&T operations (program, fiscal, contracting, data), provider performance, workforce alignment, service gaps, and geographic access.
 - b. Customer journey and compliance maps documenting participant experience, barriers, and risks.

- c. Assessment of SNAP E&T intermediary model and SNAP E&T provider readiness for transition to 50–50 reimbursement model.
 - d. Data system use assessment with recommendations for improved reporting and monitoring.
 - e. Facilitated workshops to identify challenges and co-design solutions.
 - f. Recommendations for up to three new tools to support operational improvement and oversight.
 - g. Initial modernization and expansion work plan summarizing findings and prioritized recommendations.
2. Phase 2: Infrastructure (Quarters 2–3)
- a. Updated TANF and SNAP E&T policy and operational manuals reflecting standardized, participant centered workflows.
 - b. Redesigned referral, assessment, navigation, and case management workflows that reduce burden and improve access.
 - c. Standardized tools for case management, coaching, supportive services, career planning, and milestone tracking.
 - d. Updated fiscal guidance, cost allocation materials, documentation templates, and 50–50 readiness materials.
 - e. Training curricula, job aids, onboarding resources, and cross functional training systems for program managers, program administrators, and providers.
 - f. Statewide quality standards, continuous improvement structures, and monitoring frameworks.
 - g. Up to three new or revised tools supporting performance management, monitoring, or fiscal integrity.
3. Phase 3: Strengthening Performance & Accountability (Quarter 4)
- a. Four statewide in-person convenings (two TANF E&T and two SNAP E&T) with agendas, facilitation plans, and participant materials.
 - b. Training modules for program managers, program administrators, and providers on revised processes, compliance requirements, and performance expectations.
 - c. Implementation of statewide performance standards, contract-aligned metrics, and reporting tools.
 - d. Dashboards tracking engagement, progress, outcomes, and provider performance using existing systems.
 - e. Monitoring protocols aligned with updated quality standards.

- f. Post-convening reports summarizing lessons learned and recommended system improvements.
- g. Statewide transition and sustainability plan for long-term implementation of redesigned systems.

D. Performance Measures and Standards

The Grantee's performance will be assessed using the following measures and standards:

1. Timeliness and Completion of Deliverables
 - a. All deliverables are submitted on schedule and in final, approved form.
 - b. All manuals, workflows, tools, and training materials completed within the grant period.
2. Quality and Usefulness of Deliverables
 - a. Deliverables reflect participant centered and trauma informed design.
 - b. Materials improve clarity, usability, and alignment with workforce development principles and federal requirements.
 - c. Recommendations are actionable, feasible, and support statewide scalability.
3. Program Capacity Building and Proficiency
 - a. Program managers and program administrators demonstrate improved understanding of federal policies, compliance, monitoring, workforce alignment, and technical assistance.
 - b. Training and onboarding systems show increased effectiveness and consistency.
4. Provider Capacity, Readiness, and Adoption
 - a. Providers report increased clarity in expectations and processes.
 - b. Providers adopt the redesigned workflows, tools, and data practices.
 - c. SNAP E&T providers demonstrate readiness for transition to 50–50 reimbursement model.
5. Business Process Improvements and Consistency
 - a. Redesigned workflows reduce administrative burden and improve participant access and engagement.
 - b. Processes show increased consistency across programs, geographic areas, and functional areas.
6. Participant Centered Practice and Service Quality
 - a. Case management and supportive service tools support relationship based, trauma informed practices.
 - b. Tools enable consistent tracking of participant goals, milestones, and outcomes.

7. Data Quality, Reporting, and Performance Management
 - a. Dashboards and reporting tools are used consistently by program managers, program administrators, and providers.
 - b. Data quality and consistency improve across providers.
 - c. Contract aligned metrics inform oversight, technical assistance, and decision making.
8. Fiscal Integrity and Sustainability
 - a. Providers demonstrate improved cost allocation and documentation practices.
 - b. Program managers, program administrators, and providers demonstrate increased proficiency in fiscal oversight.
 - c. Providers show readiness to implement or expand 50–50 reimbursement.
9. Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Readiness
 - a. Monitoring protocols and quality standards are implemented consistently.
 - b. Program managers, program administrators, and providers participate in ongoing continuous improvement activities.
 - c. Monitoring results demonstrate strengthened compliance and program quality.
 - d. Deliverables for renewal years are expected to expand upon and deepen the work outlined above and will be refined and prioritized based on findings, implementation experience, and stakeholder feedback gathered during year one.
- D. Program beneficiaries or program participants are limited to IDHS program staff, TANF E&T and SNAP E&T providers and participants.
- E. Authorizing statutes and regulations for the funding opportunity include the following: Activities are authorized under TANF (42 USC 601 et seq.), SNAP E&T (7 USC 2015(d)), federal cost principles at 2 CFR 200, and Illinois administrative code governing public benefits and workforce services.

IV. Application Contents and Format

- A. Content and Form of Application Submission
 1. Letters of intent are encouraged. Any applicant submitting a letter of intent may request assistance with the GATA prequalification process. To receive assistance, a letter of intent must be submitted to sheena.panoor@illinois.gov a minimum of two weeks prior to application due date.
 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 V.C.i** for details.

3. Program (Proposal) Narrative Content and Attachments

- a. Program Narrative: IMPORTANT: The program (proposal) narrative makes up the bulk of the application. Please provide a complete response to the following sections. 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. Program Narrative Sections: Please provide a complete response to the following sections. Each section must be clearly labeled and submitted in the order listed below. 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 consider content contained within that specific section.

- i. **Executive Summary (not scored)**

- xxxiii. Applicants must provide a brief, high-level overview of the proposed approach, highlighting their understanding of the project's purpose, key strategies they will employ for delivering the required phases of work, and the expected impact on statewide TANF E&T and SNAP E&T system modernization in Illinois.

- i. **Need (4 points)**

- Applicants must describe their understanding of the current challenges facing Illinois' TANF E&T and SNAP E&T programs, including gaps in access, participant experience barriers, provider capacity issues, and operational or compliance challenges. Applicants should explain why technical assistance, workforce alignment, and system modernization are necessary and how their proposed approach addresses these needs.

- ii. **Capacity (40 points)**

- Applicants must demonstrate organizational capability and readiness to implement a statewide, multi-phase systems-change initiative. The narrative should include:

- 1. Organizational Capacity & Relevant Experience

- a. Description of organizational background, mission, and experience delivering TANF E&T, SNAP E&T, or comparable technical assistance, training, and capacity-building for federal or state agencies.
 - b. Examples of experience with policy implementation, operational redesign, provider network development, and federal compliance.

- c. Demonstration of ability to manage complex, multi-phase projects under tight timelines.

2. Demonstrated Past Performance & Evidence of Impact

- a. A detailed example of prior capacity-building work for a state agency, including tools developed, strategies used, results achieved, and evidence of sustainability. The example must demonstrate experience in the following:
 - i. Advancing participant-centered and trauma-informed practices and supporting a culture of continuous improvement grounded in reducing barriers and improving customer experience.
 - ii. Redesigning business processes to improve clarity, efficiency, and operational consistency, such as referral and intake processes, assessment, case management, supportive service coordination, documentation, fiscal workflows, and provider communication, using co-design approaches with program managers, program administrators, and providers where applicable.
 - iii. Strengthening program effectiveness, service quality, workforce alignment, provider performance, and compliance with federal and state requirements, with clear descriptions of the improvements achieved.
 - iv. Implementing system changes that were successfully sustained, including new workflows, updated tools, revised policies, strengthened training systems, monitoring practices, data-driven oversight structures, clearer written guidance, or improved communication systems.
 - v. Supporting fiscal stewardship and compliance, including improving documentation practices, cost allocation, fiscal protocols, or readiness for SNAP E&T 50-50 reimbursement sustainability models.
 - vi. Applying lessons learned from other states and adapting evidence-informed workforce development practices to build scalable, statewide solutions that strengthen service delivery and participant outcomes.
 - vii. Using or improving existing data systems to enhance reporting, provider performance monitoring, and decision-making, including dashboards or other data-driven tools.
 - viii. Applicants should describe the improvements in clear, understandable terms and highlight how the work strengthened statewide systems, service quality, provider performance, or participant outcomes.
 - ix. Description of project management approaches that supported successful delivery.

3. Specialized Expertise

- a. Achieving the goals of this initiative requires specialized expertise in both TANF E&T and SNAP E&T operations, federal compliance, workforce development, organizational change management, and large-scale system modernization. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to support Illinois in building a participant-centered, and scalable statewide system. Applicants should have expertise in:
 - i. Translating complex TANF E&T and SNAP E&T federal requirements into clear, practical, and accessible operational systems that integrate program, fiscal, contracting, monitoring, and reporting functions in a consistent, participant-centered manner.
 - ii. Applying evidence-based workforce development practices, including career pathways, employer engagement, sector strategies, and work-based learning, and adapting lessons from other states to strengthen service models, provider expectations, and participant outcomes.
 - iii. Co-designing business processes, tools, training frameworks, and workflows with leadership, program managers, program administrators, fiscal teams, intermediaries, and providers to improve role clarity, operational consistency, and accountability.
 - iv. Building sustainable infrastructure, including updated workflows, manuals, fiscal guidance, quality standards, data and performance tools, and monitoring systems that can withstand staff transitions and support statewide expansion.
 - v. Strengthening provider capacity in:
 - a) relationship-based and trauma-informed case management;
 - b) supportive service coordination and navigation;
 - c) participant engagement and retention;
 - d) career planning aligned with labor market needs and employer pipelines.
 - vi. Supporting fiscal integrity and sustainable financing, including cost allocation, documentation practices, federal reporting requirements, and readiness for SNAP E&T 50-50 reimbursement.
 - vii. Strengthening data use and performance management, including the ability to leverage existing systems to track outcomes, analyze trends, build dashboards, and inform technical assistance and compliance monitoring.
 - viii. Supporting scalability and statewide implementation, including identifying geographic and service gaps, preparing providers for expansion, and building

systems that promote consistent implementation across diverse regions and organizational models.

- b. Applicants must demonstrate a strong track record in system transformation, statewide capacity building, and implementing participant-centered, evidence-informed approaches in state or multi-state environments.

4. Staffing Plan, Key Personnel & Project Management Structure

- a. Identification of key personnel roles and qualifications (e.g., TANF E&T/SNAP E&T expertise, workforce development, fiscal compliance, data systems)
 - i. Project manager must demonstrate the leadership, technical expertise, and systems-level experience necessary to oversee a complex, statewide TANF E&T and SNAP E&T modernization initiative. Indicate how the following minimum eligibility requirements are met:
 - Demonstrated experience leading large-scale, multi-site, or statewide technical assistance, workforce, or human services systems-change initiatives, including oversight of multi-disciplinary teams and coordination across program, fiscal, contracting, and data functions.
 - Documented success managing system modernization or operational redesign efforts involving policy development, workflow standardization, provider capacity building, and implementation of performance and compliance structures.
 - Experience facilitating co-design processes with state agency leadership, program staff, fiscal teams, intermediaries, and providers to develop operational tools, training systems, and cross-functional workflows.
 - ii. Indicate how the Project Team collectively demonstrates expertise in the following areas:
 - TANF E&T and SNAP E&T federal policy, operations, and compliance, including interpretation of federal guidance and integration into practical program workflows while maintaining necessary federal and state policy and program distinctions.
 - Workforce development and employer engagement strategies, including career pathways, sector strategies, labor market alignment, and employer pipeline development.
 - Trauma-informed and participant-centered practice, including reducing barriers and strengthening the participant experience.

- TANF E&T and SNAP E&T fiscal compliance and stewardship, including cost allocation, documentation practices, federal claiming requirements, and SNAP E&T 50–50 reimbursement model.
 - Data systems, performance measurement, and TANF E&T and SNAP E&T federal reporting requirements, including the ability to translate data into actionable insights for monitoring, quality improvement, and technical assistance.
 - Monitoring, quality assurance, and continuous improvement, including development of tools, standards, and protocols that support sustained program excellence.
 - Scalable program expansion and system integration, including experience expanding provider networks, implementing intermediary models, and supporting consistent service delivery across diverse regions and organizational structures.
- b. Explanation of the project management structure, timelines, management controls, and quality assurance processes.
 - c. Description of how staff roles, expertise, and structure ensure timely, coordinated, and high-quality execution.

iii. Quality (40 points)

Applicants must demonstrate a high-quality, evidence-informed approach to delivering the required phases of work. The narrative should include:

1. Approach to Delivering Technical Assistance and System-Building
 - a. Description of how Phases 1–3 will be implemented, including assessment, operational redesign, training, quality building, and performance improvement.
 - b. Explanation of how the approach supports consistency, workforce alignment, and participant-centered practices.
 - c. Demonstration of agility in adapting to evolving state priorities while maintaining high standards and compliance with distinct TANF E&T and SNAP E&T federal policy and requirements.
2. Participant-Centered Design Competency
 - a. Description of experience using participant-centered frameworks, improving customer experience, and embedding trauma-informed and participant-centered practices in public benefits or workforce programs.
3. Data, Reporting & Continuous Improvement Capability

- a. Explanation of experience designing or improving data systems, dashboards, reporting tools, and continuous improvement structures aligned with TANF E&T and SNAP E&T federal program requirements.
 - b. Description of processes for ensuring accurate, timely, and actionable data outputs.
4. Fiscal Management & Compliance Expertise
- a. Demonstration of expertise in both TANF E&T and SNAP E&T fiscal requirements, cost allocation, documentation, supportive service rules, and financial management training.
 - b. Description of management controls and fiscal monitoring processes.
5. Monitoring, Quality Assurance & Risk Management
- a. Description of experience developing monitoring frameworks, corrective action processes, risk-based reviews, and provider accountability systems.
 - b. Explanation of how the approach promotes consistency, quality, and compliance across providers and regions.
6. Program Evaluation & Continuous Improvement
- a. Demonstration of experience applying rapid-cycle evaluation or other continuous improvement methodologies to support data-driven, sustainable system enhancements.

2. Budget and Budget Narrative (16 points)

- a. Applicants must enter a budget electronically in the [IDHS: CSA Tracking System](#). The Budget entered into the CSA system must 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. 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 by program regulatory requirements and the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200), as applicable.

3. Required Forms

- a. [Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance](#): 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. [Grantee Conflict of Interest Disclosure](#) - The Grantee Conflict of Interest Disclosure is 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.

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 with requirements and use that determination as a basis to award another applicant.

7. Proprietary information

Proprietary information included in the application must be designated in advance otherwise it may be subject to potential FOIA release. Proprietary information must be identified by highlighting the information in yellow in all spaces in the application. A second redacted version of the application may also be submitted. (Include the term "Redacted" in the file name.)

8. Additional Content and Format Requirements

- a. Application is limited to no more than 20 pages.
- b. Applications must follow required formatting: 12-point Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, black font, and submitted as PDFs. Required attachments include the Uniform Application, Conflict of Interest Disclosure, W-9, Program Narrative, and CSA Budget.

V. Submission Requirements and Deadlines

A. Address to Request Application Package: sheena.panoor@illinois.gov

B. 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.I.ii**). It is the responsibility of each applicant to monitor the website and comply with any instructions or requirements related to the NOFO.
3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Each applicant must:

- a. Be registered in [SAM.gov](#) before submitting its application;
- b. Provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and
- c. 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.
- d. The Department may not make an award until applicant has fully complied to all UEI and SAM requirements
- e. The department may determine that an applicant is not qualified if they have not complied with requirements and use that determination as a basis to award another applicant.

C. Submission Instructions

1. Applicants must electronically submit the complete application including all required narratives and attachments in the prescribed order:
 - a. [Uniform-Application-for-State-Grant-Assistance.pdf](#)
 - b. Program Narrative and attachments
 - c. [Grantee Conflict of Interest Disclosure](#)
 - d. Budget (entered into the CSA system as described in **Section IV.4**)
2. Applications must be sent electronically to sheena.panoor@illinois.gov The application will be electronically time-stamped upon receipt. 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. 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.
4. If you are experiencing system problems or technical difficulties submitting your application, you may contact:
 - a. Name: *Sheena Panoor*
 - b. Email: sheena.panoor@illinois.gov

D. Submission Dates and Times

1. Full applications are due on the following date July 6, 2026 at the following time 11:59 pm (CST).
2. Letters of intent to apply are encouraged. Applicants may request assistance with GATA prequalification up to two weeks prior to the application due date.

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 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.

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

VI. Application Review Information

A. Eligibility Review

1. Applications that are received will be reviewed within 7 days of the due date to ensure they meet the criteria for consideration. Applications that do not meet the criteria in paragraph B below will be rejected and not be entered into the Merit Review process.
2. The following are the criteria that must be met for eligibility:
 - a. Applicant has a current registration with the State of Illinois in the Grantee Portal.
 - b. Applicant has an active [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) public account.
 - c. Applicant has an active Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) with [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov)
 - d. Applicant is in "good standing" with the Secretary of State.
 - e. Applicant is not on the DHS Stop Payment List Service or the Illinois Stop Payment List.
 - f. Applicant is not on the [Sam.gov](https://sam.gov) Exclusion List.
 - g. Applicant is not on the Illinois Medicaid Sanctions List.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Review Criteria
 - a. 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 criterion and sub-criterion include the following:
 - i. Applications will be evaluated based on applicant's response to the program narrative described in **Section IV.A.3 Program Narrative Content and Attachments**.
 - ii. Criteria and Weighting of each criterion
 1. Executive Summary (not scored)
 2. Need (up to 4 points)
 3. Capacity/Agency Qualifications (up to 40 points)

4. Quality/Description of Program Services, Design and Implementation (Provider Program Plan) (up to 40 points)

5. Budget & Cost Justification (up to 16 points)

b. Statutory, regulatory, or other preferences

Experience providing technical assistance to a federal or state agency on SNAP E&T in compliance with 7 CFR 273.7 and TANF E&T in compliance with 45 CFR Part 261.

c. Cost Sharing *will not be* considered in the review process.

B. Review and Selection Process

1. The process for evaluation of the application is as follows:

a. 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.

2. 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 grants shall not be considered public information.

3. In the event of a tie with insufficient funding for all tied applications, the Department may choose to choose one or more of the following options:

a. Apply one or more of the additional factors for consideration described above to prioritize the applications; or

b. Partially fund each of the tied applications; or

c. Not fund any of the tied applications. The Department reserves the right to negotiate with successful applicants to adjust award amounts, targets, deliverables, etc.

4. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates: TBD

C. 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: *Sheena Panoor*
 2. Email address: sheena.panoor@illinois.gov
 3. Email Subject Line: *FY27 444-80-2538 NOFO 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. Name and address of the appealing party
 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:
 1. Review of the appeal;
 2. Appeal determination; and
 3. Rationale for the determination.

D. Risk Review

1. Requirements:

- a. IDHS conducts risk assessments for all awardees, prior to the award being issued.
 - i. 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:
 - 1. Quality of Management Systems
 - 2. Financial and Programmatic Reporting
 - 3. Ability to Effectively Implement Award Requirements
 - 4. Awardee Audits
 - ii. A program specific Programmatic Risk Assessment conducted by the awarding agency to evaluate the following categories:
 - 1. Programmatic financial stability
 - 2. Management systems and standards that would affect the program.
 - 3. Programmatic audit and monitoring findings
 - 4. Ability to effectively implement program requirements.
 - 5. External partnerships
 - 6. Programmatic reporting
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. 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.
- b. Simplified Acquisition Threshold - Federal and State awards
 - i. 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.
 - 1. 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)
 - 2. 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.

3. 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

VII. Award Notices

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.

VIII. Post-Award Requirements and Administration

A. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. 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.
2. [Sample of the current IDHS Uniform Grant Agreement](#)

B. 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.

C. Reporting

1. 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:
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. Close-out Performance Reports and Financial Reports as instructed in the UGA.
 - d. 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.
 - e. 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.
 - f. Noncompliance with any of the identified reports may lead to being placed on the Illinois Stop-Payment List

IX. Other Information

A. Mandatory Forms and Submission

1. [Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance](#)
2. Proposal (Program) Narrative
3. Uniform Grant Budget in CSA
4. [Grantee Conflict of Interest Disclosure](#)