U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Health Resources and Services Administration

Maternal and Child Health Bureau
Division of Research

Bridging the Word Gap Research Network

Announcement Type: New, Competing Continuation
Funding Opportunity Number: HRSA-16-040
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) No. 93.110

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

Fiscal Year 2016

Application Due Date: May 9, 2016

Ensure SAM.gov and Grants.gov registrations and passwords are current immediately!
Deadline extensions are not granted for lack of registration.
Registration in all systems, including SAM.gov and Grants.gov, may take up to one month to complete.

Release Date: March 9, 2016
Issuance Date: March 9, 2016

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Authority: Social Security Act, Title V, § 501(a)(2), as amended (42 U.S.C. 701(a)(2))
**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau’s (MCHB), Office of Epidemiology and Research is accepting applications for fiscal year (FY) 2016 Bridging the Word Gap Research Network program. This cooperative agreement opportunity will establish and maintain a national interdisciplinary research network designed to reduce the gap in exposure to language among children from low-SES families, as compared to children from higher-SES families, also known as the “word gap”. The research network will foster scientific collaboration, with a focus on research designed to develop and test interventions to improve early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and language development for children from lower socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds, including Dual Language Learners (DLLs). The Network should include researchers across a range of disciplines reflecting attention to the health and development of the child and family.

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<tr>
<th>Funding Opportunity Title:</th>
<th>Bridging the Word Gap Research Network</th>
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<tr>
<td>Due Date for Applications:</td>
<td>May 9, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anticipated Total Annual Available Funding:</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated Number and Type of Award(s):</td>
<td>Up to one (1) cooperative agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated Award Amount:</td>
<td>Up to $300,000 per year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost Sharing/Match Required:</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Project Period:</td>
<td>September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2021 (five (5) years)</td>
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**Eligible Applicants:**

As cited in 42 CFR Part 51a.3(b), only public or nonprofit institutions of higher learning and public or private nonprofit agencies engaged in research or in programs relating to maternal and child health and/or services for children with special health care needs are eligible.

[See Section III-1 of this funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for complete eligibility information.]
Application Guide

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I. Program Funding Opportunity Description

1. Purpose

This announcement solicits applications for the Bridging the Word Gap Research Network Program.

This cooperative agreement opportunity will establish and maintain a national interdisciplinary research network designed to reduce the vocabulary gap between children from low-SES families as compared to children from higher-SES families. The research network will foster scientific collaboration, with a focus on research designed to develop and test interventions to improve early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and language development for children from lower socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds, including Dual Language Learners (DLLs). The Network should include researchers across a range of disciplines reflecting attention to the health and development of the child and family.

The awardee will complete the following major activities:

Infrastructure Development:

- Develop and maintain a national interdisciplinary network (hereafter referred to as “the Network”) of researchers and stakeholder partners (e.g., early intervention specialists, health care professionals, child care providers) who collaborate in research designed to reduce the gap in language exposure and consequent language skills that accrue to children from low-SES families as compared to children from higher-SES families, thus affecting their reading skills at kindergarten entry, and their later school success;

Internal Communications:

- Develop a schedule of ongoing internal communication among Network members, and with the HRSA/MCHB Project Officer.

Network Activities:

- Develop and/or update a national research agenda for scientific studies designed to identify existing research gaps, build upon advances in research and practice in the field of early language development, including dual and second language development, and enable the Network to pursue priority research questions;
- Implement Network activities and research to reduce the language exposure and vocabulary gap between lower and higher-SES children, including lower-SES children who are DLLs;
- Design and implement one research study that develops and tests at least one intervention to improve early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and/or language development for children from lower SES backgrounds, with a focus on improving “parent/caregiver talk” and promoting child language development within the family context, including fathers;
- Secure external funding for one multi-level pilot intervention study;
• Create a practice-based research collaborative to identify cutting edge research projects and leverage network capacity to compete for grant opportunities; and

• Advance the nation’s capacity to conduct research on vocabulary acquisition and school achievement for young children by: building relevant data infrastructure; improving analytic methods; and fostering research and mentorship opportunities for new investigators through active communication, networking, collaboration and use of innovative mentorship/research experiences.

**Dissemination:**

• Maintain a Network website to disseminate research findings, activities and products and to engage with the field on Network research and other activities;

• Develop and implement a plan to disseminate Network findings through at least two peer-reviewed publications per year, webinars, annual Network meetings, conference presentations, and other related dissemination activities. These activities should serve to facilitate the transfer of Network findings to a broader audience including researchers, health professionals and providers, policy makers, educators, families, and programs serving children from lower SES backgrounds; and

• Translate research findings into practice, as applicable per study findings.

Activities related to the Network’s research agenda should show awareness of previous work of this Network, and draw from four key themes: (1) General research questions, (2) how interventions can be adapted for non-parental caregivers, (3) the best and most cost-effective modes of delivery, and (4) contextual factors that may affect an intervention’s impact. These are areas in which knowledge is lacking, and which the Network is encouraged to address.

(1) Research Questions

• What are the components of interventions effective in increasing the quality and quantity of caregiver language?

• What are the features or characteristics of interventions that show the most sustained changes in behavior after the program ends?

• How can the unique role of fathers in language development be addressed?

• How will the intervention be evaluated for its long term impact?

• How should the intervention be tailored for children who are DLLs?

(2) Interventions for Non-parental Caregivers

• Are parent-designed language interventions translatable for the early care and education workforce in the form of professional development opportunities (e.g., trainings, coaching/mentoring, etc.), particularly for teachers of infants and toddlers?

• Does information dissemination on its own catalyze any behavior change in teachers, or is more intensive coaching required to see results in reducing the language gap?
(3) Mode of Delivery

• What are the cost/benefit differences between basic information sharing; short-term workshops; short-term coaching interventions; and long-term coaching interventions? What training dosage is necessary to provide optimal motivation for teacher or parent behavior change in talking to infants/toddlers/children?

• What are the reliability, validity, and fidelity of implementation for online administration of language-focused interventions?

• Do public awareness efforts/messaging interventions layered on top of existing programs/infrastructure prove effective for improving language development among parents?

• Do short-term intensive interventions layered on top of existing programs/infrastructure prove effective for improving language development?

• How can a high-quality preschool environment serve as another mechanism for facilitating early language development, especially for children who are DLLs?

• How can effective interventions be scaled up at low cost, allowing for universal implementation for low SES families?

(4) Contextual Factors

• How do contextual factors (i.e., stress, poverty, depression) affect a caregiver’s ability to benefit from a language intervention, and how can interventions maximize their impact on adults living in these circumstances?

• How can interventions address these contextual factors, specifically addressing toxic stress exposure among parents, developing parental executive functioning skills, and facilitating behavior change among parents?

• How does the culture and native language of families/teachers/children affect intervention fidelity and effectiveness of language-intensive interventions?

• Are interventions devised for native English speaking teachers/parents/children translatable to non-native English speaking groups?

• Are there effective interventions devised to help native English-speaking teachers promote the language development of DLLs who are less proficient in English?

• Are there cultural barriers or resistance to “talk to your kids” messages and interventions, particularly for Latino, Native American, and African American families? If so, how can these be addressed?

Regarding planning for the Network’s two research studies, the following aspects should be addressed:

(1) These two studies must be developed within one year of award and include details on plans for either implementation or submission to external funder during the project period; for competing continuation applicant, a brief synopsis of the protocol developed during the prior project period along with details on the plan to implement the protocol must be included;

(2) The two required interventions may address population-level efforts, community-level interventions, and/or intensive family and individual-level interventions;

(3) Intensive family-level interventions should focus on contextual factors for families living in poverty, such as toxic stress exposure, and should further research on interventions that address these challenges. This intervention should also consider existing research gaps
on special populations such as low-SES fathers and children who are Dual Language Learners; and
(4) The population-level efforts should explore using health care settings as a mechanism of providing interventions and information.

Consistent with HRSA’s mission to improve access to quality services to underserved populations, the MCHB’s intent is to ensure that research activities are responsive to the cultural and linguistic needs of special populations, that services are family-centered and accessible to consumers, and that the broadest possible representation of culturally distinct and historically underrepresented groups is supported through programs and projects sponsored by the MCHB.

2. Background

The legislative authority for this FOA is: Social Security Act, Title V, § 501(a)(2), as amended (42 U.S.C. 701(a)(2))

There is evidence that socioeconomic status is a strong indicator of school achievement, and that children from lower SES backgrounds exhibit a delay in early literacy skills, a slower vocabulary acquisition rate, and lower school readiness rates1. Once American children enter kindergarten, there is a significant, prevalent gap between children from higher versus lower SES backgrounds in average oral language skills2.

There is also growing evidence that early language exposure for children may not only have a significant influence on language development and school achievement, but on the overall trajectory of children’s lives, including later academic and occupation success.1 Existing literature reveals several key themes in addressing the language gap, including the significant role of the caregiver in the home, and the effectiveness of engaging parents in language interventions3. A significant influence on children’s language development is the context of parenting and parent responsiveness to children’s early language acquisition.1 Research in this area shows that both the quality and quantity of speech spoken at home during daily interactions influences the relationship between SES and child language skills at school entry.4 However, research also shows that interventions engaging parents and increasing their knowledge of child

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4 Hoff, E. (2009) Do vocabulary differences explain achievement gaps and can vocabulary-targeted interventions close them? (Prepared for the National Research Council workshop on the Role of Language in Education.)
development and the importance of child talk may be an effective route to preventing and addressing the SES-related language gap.\(^4\) A meta-analysis of parent-implemented language interventions showed that these parent interventions had significant and positive effects on children’s language skills, vocabulary, and other aspects of language development.\(^2\) They also showed that parent training had a significant impact on parent use of interventions, and on parent-child interaction style related to responsiveness, use of language models, and rate of communication.\(^2\)

Previous findings also suggest that parents from low SES environments experience greater stress and depression than high SES parents. Mothers who have higher levels of depression are less responsive to infant vocalizations, talk less to their infants, and are less likely to use child-directed speech in communication with their infants\(^4\). It is thus critical to address the challenges facing parents in low SES environments and to tailor interventions to be most empowering and effective in these contexts.

In addition, research shows that the ways in which lower SES parents communicate with their children are impacted by the parent’s beliefs and knowledge about child development; and that parents from lower SES environments may feel they have less control over their children’s development. Therefore any effective intervention addressing early development in the home must also address parent knowledge, skills, and beliefs simultaneously.

Lower SES families who also speak a language other than English at home may face issues similar to their lower SES monolingual English-speaking peers—with the added challenge of having a home language that is different from the majority language used in critical systems that families interface with, such as the health and education systems. Despite the large and growing population of young children who are DLLs and the benefits many of them could experience from strategies designed to support their first and second language development, there are few interventions—including parent-focused interventions and early learning curricula—designed specifically for them.

Other key areas where research is needed include whether these interventions will create a lasting change in the home environment, and how these interventions affect children’s long-term school readiness and achievement.\(^1\) It is clear that interventions should address the relationship between parenting beliefs, knowledge and behaviors by targeting parenting knowledge in an effort to increase the quantity and quality of language input parents address to children.\(^4\) Such interventions may benefit parents as well as their children as they learn more about child development and see their role in their children’s development as critical.\(^4\)

**MCH Research Program**

The MCH Bridging the Word Gap Research Network is administered by the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Research Program, located within MCHB’s Division of Research, Office of Epidemiology and Research (OER). The MCH Research Program has supported groundbreaking investigations that have significantly influenced clinical management, organization and delivery of health care services, preventive care, and early intervention for the maternal and child health population, including children with special health care needs.
The MCH Research Program supports applied and translational research and research networks relating to maternal and child health services that show promise of substantial contribution in enhancing health care services and the health and well-being of mothers, children, and families.

For more information about the MCH Research Program, visit our website: http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/research.

II. Award Information

1. Type of Application and Award

Type(s) of applications sought: New, Competing Continuation.

Funding will be provided in the form of a cooperative agreement. A cooperative agreement, as opposed to a grant, is an award instrument of financial assistance where substantial involvement is anticipated between HRSA and the recipient during performance of the contemplated project.

For this cooperative agreement, **HRSA Program involvement will include:**

- Assurance of the availability of HRSA/MCHB personnel or designees to participate in the planning and development of all phases of this program;
- Review of policies and procedures established for carrying out project activities;
- Participation in meetings and regular communications with the award recipient to review mutually agreed upon goals and objectives and to assess progress;
- Facilitation of effective communication and accountability to HRSA/MCHB regarding the project, with special attention to new program initiatives and policy development that have the potential to advance the utility of the Bridging the Word Gap Research Network Program;
- Assistance in establishing and maintaining federal interagency and inter-organizational contacts necessary to carry out the project;
- Review of documents developed by the Network including internal documents such as Network operating procedures and authorship guidelines, as well as manuscripts for submission to peer-reviewed journals; and
- Participation in project activities such as meetings, webinars, presentations, publications, and other forms of disseminating information regarding project results and activities.

**The cooperative agreement recipient’s responsibilities will include:**

- Develop and maintain a national interdisciplinary network of researchers and stakeholder partners (e.g., early intervention specialists, health care professionals, child care providers) who collaborate in research designed to reduce the “word gap”, including collaborative activities involving the winners of the ‘Word Gap Challenge’;
- Develop and/or update a national research agenda for scientific studies designed to identify existing research gaps, build upon advances in research and practice in the field of early language development, and enable the Network to pursue priority research questions;
- Develop and implement Network activities and research to reduce the vocabulary gap between lower and higher-SES children;
• Design and implement one research study that develops and tests at least one intervention to improve early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and/or language development for children from lower SES backgrounds, including DLLs, with a focus on improving “parent/caregiver talk” and promoting child language development within the family context;
• Secure external funding for one multi-level pilot intervention study;
• Create a practice-based research collaborative to identify cutting edge research projects and leverage network capacity to compete for grant opportunities;
• Advance the nation’s capacity to conduct research on vocabulary acquisition and school achievement for young children by: building relevant data infrastructure; improving analytic methods; and fostering research and mentorship opportunities for new investigators through active communication, networking, collaboration and use of innovative mentorship/research experiences;
• Maintain a Network website to disseminate research findings, activities and products and to engage with the field on Network research and other activities;
• Develop and implement a plan to disseminate Network findings through at least two peer-reviewed publications per year, webinars, annual Network meetings, conference presentations, and other related dissemination activities;
• Translate research findings into practice, as applicable per study findings;
• Adhere to HRSA requirements pertaining to acknowledgement and disclaimer on all products produced by HRSA award funds. See “Acknowledgment of Federal Funding” in Section 2.2 of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide; and
• Develop a schedule of ongoing communication among Network members, and with the HRSA/MCHB Project Officer.

2. Summary of Funding

This program will provide funding during federal FY 2016 – 2020. Approximately $300,000 is expected to be available annually to fund one (1) recipient. Applicants may apply for a ceiling amount of up to $300,000 per year. The project period is five (5) years. Funding beyond the first year is dependent on the availability of appropriated funds for “Bridging the Word Gap Research Network Program” in subsequent fiscal years, satisfactory recipient performance, and a decision that continued funding is in the best interest of the Federal Government.

Effective December 26, 2014, all administrative and audit requirements and the cost principles that govern federal monies associated with this award will be subject to the Uniform Guidance 2 CFR 200 as codified by HHS at 45 CFR 75, which supersede the previous administrative and audit requirements and cost principles that govern federal monies.
III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

As cited in 42 CFR Part 51a.3(b), only public or nonprofit institutions of higher learning and public or private nonprofit agencies engaged in research or in programs relating to maternal and child health and/or services for children with special health care needs are eligible.

Foreign entities are not eligible for HRSA awards, unless the authorizing legislation specifically authorizes awards to foreign entities or the award is for research. This exception does not extend to research training awards or construction of research facilities.

2. Cost Sharing/Matching

Cost sharing/matching is not required for this program.

3. Other

Applications that exceed the ceiling amount will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered for funding under this announcement.

Any application that fails to satisfy the deadline requirements referenced in Section IV.4 will be considered non-responsive and will not be considered for funding under this announcement.

NOTE: Multiple applications from an organization are not allowable. A Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Investigator (Co-PI) on an existing MCHB-funded research network cannot serve as PI or Co-PI on more than one MCHB-funded network at a time.

If for any reason (including submitting to the wrong funding opportunity number or making corrections/updates), an application is submitted more than once prior to the application due date, HRSA will only accept the applicant’s last validated electronic submission, under the correct funding opportunity number, prior to the Grants.gov application due date as the final and only acceptable application.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

HRSA requires applicants for this FOA to apply electronically through Grants.gov. Applicants must download the SF-424 application package associated with this FOA following the directions provided at Grants.gov.
2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Section 4 of HRSA’s *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* provides instructions for the budget, budget justification, staffing plan and personnel requirements, assurances, certifications, and abstract. You must submit the information outlined in the Application Guide in addition to the program-specific information below. All applicants are responsible for reading and complying with the instructions included in HRSA’s *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* except where instructed in the FOA to do otherwise.

See Section 8.5 of the *Application Guide* for the Application Completeness Checklist.

**Application Page Limit**

The total size of all uploaded files may not exceed the equivalent of 80 pages when printed by HRSA. The page limit includes the abstract, project and budget narratives, attachments including biographical sketches (biosketches), and letters of commitment and support required in HRSA’s *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* and this FOA. Standard OMB-approved forms that are included in the application package are NOT included in the page limit. Exception: Biographical Sketch in Appendix A of the R&R Application Guide does count in the page limit. Indirect Cost Rate Agreement and proof of non-profit status (if applicable) will not be counted in the page limit. **We strongly urge applicants to take appropriate measures to ensure the application does not exceed the specified page limit.**

Applications must be complete, within the specified page limit, and validated by Grants.gov under the correct funding opportunity number prior to the deadline to be considered under the announcement.

**Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility, and Voluntary Exclusion Certification**

1) The prospective recipient certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any federal department or agency.

2) Where the prospective recipient is unable to attest to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective recipient shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

See Section 4.1 viii of HRSA’s *SF-424 Application Guide* for additional information on this and other certifications.
Program-Specific Instructions
In addition to application requirements and instructions in Section 4 of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide (including the budget, budget justification, staffing plan and personnel requirements, assurances, certifications, and abstract), please include the following:

i. Project Abstract
See Section 4.1.ix of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide. Include the information requested at the top of the abstract. Prepare the abstract so that it is clear, accurate, concise, and without reference to other parts of the application because it is often distributed to provide information to the public and Congress. Briefly state the principal needs and problem, goals, proposed activities including target population(s), planned coordination, anticipated products, and plans for evaluation.

Abstract content:
- Clearly indicate the FOA number and title.
- PROBLEM: Briefly state the principal needs and problems which are addressed by the project.
- GOAL(S) AND OBJECTIVES: Identify the major goal(s) and objectives for the project period. Typically, the goal is stated in a sentence or paragraph, and the objectives are presented in a numbered list.
- PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AND TARGET POPULATION(S): Describe the programs and activities used to attain the objectives, the target population(s) addressed, and comment on innovations and other characteristics of the proposed plan.
- COORDINATION: Describe the coordination planned with and participation of appropriate national, regional, state, and/or local health agencies, interdisciplinary professional groups and providers, and/or organizations that function as stakeholders or partners in the proposed project.
- PRODUCTS: Provide a brief description of the anticipated products of this Network, including modes of dissemination of project activities and findings.
- EVALUATION: Briefly describe the evaluation methods used to assess program outcomes and the effectiveness and efficiency of the project in attaining goals and objectives.

From the Appendix select: (1) a maximum of ten (10) significant content terms that describe your project, and as many (2) targeted populations and (3) age ranges as apply. Include the selected key terms for (1) content, (2) populations, and (3) age ranges targeted at the end of your abstract.

ii. Project Narrative
This section provides a comprehensive framework and description of all aspects of the proposed project. It should be succinct, self-explanatory and well organized so that reviewers can understand the proposed project.
Use the following section headers for the Narrative:

Section I. Background and Significance

Section II. Specific Goals and Objectives

Section III. Project Design: Methods and Evaluation

Section IV. Plan and Schedule of Implementation, and Capability of Applicant

- SECTION I - BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE -- Corresponds to Section V’s Review Criteria #1 Need, #2 Response, #4 Impact
  In this section, the applicant should:
  • Demonstrate a thorough knowledge and understanding of the existing research literature and current practice in early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and language development for children from lower SES backgrounds, including children from lower SES backgrounds who are also DLLs.
  • Provide a brief literature review, identify current research gaps and discuss the national significance and impact of a research network and how multi-site research can make a difference in improving early language exposure with potential to not only significantly influence language development and school achievement, but the overall trajectory of children’s lives.

- SECTION II – SPECIFIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES -- Corresponds to Section V’s Review Criteria #2 Response, #4 Impact, #5 Resources/Capabilities

This section of the narrative must include:
  • A numbered list of the specific goals and objectives (that address the major activities listed in the Purpose section of this announcement) to be accomplished during the funding period. The specific objectives should be succinctly stated. The applicant should be innovative with respect to specific objectives, but should direct attention to the scope of expected activities listed.
  • The applicant should describe the process for developing an integrated research network and present a plan of proposed activities that shows progressive implementation during the five-year project period.
  • A description of the activities or steps that will be used to achieve each of the project goals should also be included. Please use a time line that includes each activity and identifies responsible staff.
  • As appropriate, identify meaningful support and collaboration with key stakeholders and partners in planning, designing, and implementing all activities.
  • Applicants must submit a logic model for designing and managing their project in this section of the narrative. A logic model is a one-page diagram that presents the conceptual framework for a proposed project and explains the links among program elements. While there are many versions of logic models, for the purposes of this announcement, the logic model should summarize the connections between the:
- Goals of the project;
- Theoretical approach;
- Inputs (e.g., organizational profile, collaborative partners, other resources);
- Target population(s);
- Activities;
- Outputs (i.e., products); and
- Outcomes (i.e., the results of the project, typically describing a change in people or systems).

More information on logic models may be found in Section VIII of this FOA.

- The application should provide documentation (letters of agreement) of participation of an interdisciplinary team that will collaborate to fulfill the goals and objectives of the research network. Letters of agreement from collaborators should be included as Attachment 3.

SECTION III – PROJECT DESIGN: METHODS AND EVALUATION -- Corresponds to Section V’s Review Criteria # 2 Response, #3 Evaluative Measures, #4 Impact, #5 Resources/Capabilities

A. Methods:

- This section of the narrative must provide detailed descriptions of the methodology for accomplishing each of the specific objectives. The applicant must provide sufficient technical detail to demonstrate the necessary steps to accomplish each objective, and to convey to reviewers adequate information to assess the methodology.

- An important aspect of a successful application is the ability to develop a conceptual proposal for Network research to address the word gap through the development and testing of interventions to improve early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and language development for children from lower SES backgrounds, including children from lower SES backgrounds who are DLLs.

- Include descriptions of the following 2 proposals:
  - A brief synopsis of the protocol for a multi-level pilot intervention that will be fully developed within 1 year of award; include the specific objectives, research methods, and plans for implementation during the project period. For competing continuation applicants, provide a brief synopsis of the protocol developed during the prior project period along with details on the progress of implementation or plan to implement the protocol. The protocol for the multi-level pilot intervention study must address the following:
    - The intervention must address multiple contextual levels, including population-level efforts, community-level interventions, and intensive family and individual-level interventions;
    - The intensive, family-level interventions must address the contextual factors for families living in poverty, such as toxic stress exposure,
social norms on parenting styles, executive functioning skills, etc., and must further the research on interventions that address these challenges in tandem with language development interventions. This intervention should also emphasize the role of fathers and tailor interventions to include father engagement, and consider impact with regard to children who are DLL.

- The population-level efforts should explore using health care settings as a mechanism of providing interventions and information.

  - A concept proposal for further development during the project period, describing the need, specific objectives and research methods of any proposed studies.

In this section, applicants must also discuss plans to disseminate findings including:

  - Peer-reviewed publications. It is expected that the Network will produce at least two peer-reviewed publications per study conducted by the Network; and
  - Other dissemination to the research and practice communities, as well as families and communities, including but not limited to: informational products and educational opportunities, webinars, website material, plenary sessions, abstracts, conference presentations, annual Network meetings, and consumer materials for key stakeholders such as providers, communities, states, and families that will promote the transfer of findings into practice.

- The applicant must also indicate the specific methods to be used to evaluate progress in each area of activity. The applicant must list and discuss anticipated obstacles that may be encountered and indicate how each obstacle will be overcome.

- It is crucial that the applicant describes how the interdisciplinary team will function in partnership within the Network to accomplish the proposed goals and objectives. Applicants must anticipate potential problems and challenges that may arise in this process, and propose mechanisms for collaborative resolution.

- Successful participation in the Network includes the ability to work collaboratively to achieve the goals of the Network, address challenges, and fulfill commitments to the project as indicated in the proposal and letters of agreement.

B. Evaluation:

- Applicants must describe a plan for program performance evaluation that will contribute to continuous quality improvement. The program performance evaluation should monitor ongoing processes and the progress towards the goals and objectives of the project.

- Applicants must describe the systems, processes, and staff that will support the organization's performance management requirements through effective tracking of performance outcomes, including a description of how the organization will collect and manage data (e.g., assigned skilled staff, data management software) in a way that allows for accurate and timely reporting of performance outcomes. As appropriate, describe the data collection strategies that will be used to collect, analyze, and track data to measure progress and impact/outcomes with different
sociocultural groups (e.g., race, ethnicity, language, rural versus urban, socioeconomic, gender), and explain how the data will be used to inform program development and service delivery. Applicants must describe any potential obstacles for implementing the program performance evaluation and how those obstacles will be addressed.

- For each described objective, an evaluation measure must be included. The evaluation measure must be measurable and a timeline for evaluation should be presented consistent with the plan and schedule of implementation of the goals and objectives of the project.

- **SECTION IV – PLAN AND SCHEDULE OF IMPLEMENTATION, AND CAPABILITY OF THE APPLICANT –** Corresponds to Section V’s Review Criteria #3 Evaluative Measures, #4 Impact, #5 Resources/Capabilities, #6 Support Requested

  - In this section of the narrative, the applicant must provide a description of the organizational plan for management of the project, including an explanation of the roles and responsibilities of interdisciplinary project personnel and collaborators.
  - In addition, an implementation schedule should be provided for each activity described in previous sections. The material should be presented in a succinct manner, with a brief listing of specific milestones and expected outcomes.
  - In demonstrating capability to fulfill the goals of the Network program, the applicant must:
    
    - Describe its significant experience and the publication record of key personnel in carrying out interdisciplinary collaborative research and related projects relating to the goals and objectives of the research network; and
    - Describe how the Network will build the capacity to conduct critical research studies to advance research and practice in the field of early language development through both MCHB and other external funding sources.

- If the application is a competing continuation, the applicant must also describe its significant experience and accomplishments in Attachment 5: Summary Progress Report.

  **Please include reference citations for publications and works cited following the end of the Project Narrative, not as an attachment.**
NARRATIVE GUIDANCE

In order to ensure that the Review Criteria are fully addressed, this table provides a crosswalk between the narrative language and where each section falls within the review criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Section</th>
<th>Review Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>Background and Significance</td>
<td>(1) Need, (2) Response, (4) Impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific Goals and Objectives</td>
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<td>Project Design: Methods and Evaluation</td>
<td>(2) Response, (3) Evaluative Measures, (4) Impact, (5) Resources/Capabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan and Schedule of Implementation, and Capability of Applicant</td>
<td>(3) Evaluative Measures, (4) Impact, (5) Resources/Capabilities, (6) Support Requested</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biographical Sketches</td>
<td>(5) Resources/Capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget and Budget Justification Narrative</td>
<td>(6) Support Requested – the budget section should include sufficient justification to allow reviewers to determine the reasonableness of the support requested.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### iii. Budget


**Reminder:** The Total Project or Program Costs are the total allowable costs (inclusive of direct and indirect costs) incurred by the recipient to carry out a HRSA-supported project or activity. Total project or program costs include costs charged to the award and costs borne by the recipient to satisfy a matching or cost-sharing requirement, as applicable.

In addition, the Bridging the Word Gap Research Network program requires the following:

- The maximum number of budget periods allowed is five (5). A budget period represents 12 months of project effort.
- Applicants for this announcement should use the “Other Sponsored Program/Activities” indirect cost rate. Any non-federal entity that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, (except a governmental department or agency unit that receives more than $35 million in direct federal funding) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all federal awards until such time as a non-federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-federal entity may apply to do at any time. See 45 CFR 75, HHS’s codification of the Uniform Guidance at [http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=4d52364ec3fab994c665943dadf9cf7&ty=HTML&h= L&r=PART&n=pt45.1.75](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=1&SID=4d52364ec3fab994c665943dadf9cf7&ty=HTML&h=L&r=PART&n=pt45.1.75), particularly § 75.414 (f) Indirect (F&A) costs.
• Yearly travel expenses should be budgeted to allow the PI of the Network to meet with MCHB officials in the Washington, D.C. area.

NOTE: Travel outside of the U.S. is not supported for the Bridging the Word Gap Research Network Program.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, Division H, § 202, (P.L. 114-113) states, “None of the funds appropriated in this title shall be used to pay the salary of an individual, through an award or other extramural mechanism, at a rate in excess of Executive Level II.” Please see Section 4.1.iv Budget – Salary Limitation of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide for additional information. Note that these or other salary limitations will apply in FY 2016, as required by law.

iv. Budget Justification Narrative
See Section 4.1.v. of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide. In addition, the Bridging the Word Gap Research Network program requires the following:

Staffing Plan and Personnel Requirements
Please refer to instructions in Section 4.1.vi of HRSA’s SF-424 Application Guide. Include the position descriptions (roles, responsibilities, and qualifications of proposed project staff) in the Budget Justification under Personnel costs. The budget justification is uploaded into the Budget Narrative Attachment Form. Biographical sketches for any key employed personnel that will be assigned to work on the proposed project must be included as Attachment 1. Due to the HRSA 80-page limit, it is recommended that each biographical sketch is no more than two (2) pages in length and must follow the HRSA font/margin requirements. Biographical sketches should document education, skills, and experience that are relevant, necessary, and demonstrate capability to fulfill the assigned roles for the proposed project.

v. Program-Specific Forms
1) Performance Standards for Special Projects of Regional or National Significance (SPRANS) and Other MCHB Discretionary Projects

HRSA has modified its reporting requirements for SPRANS projects, Community Integrated Service Systems (CISS) projects, and other grant programs administered by MCHB to include national performance measures that were developed in accordance with the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 (Public Law 103-62). This Act requires the establishment of measurable goals for federal programs that can be reported as part of the budgetary process, thus linking funding decisions with performance. Performance measures for states have also been established under the Block Grant provisions of Title V of the Social Security Act, MCHB’s authorizing legislation. Performance measures for other MCHB-funded grant programs have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget and are primarily based on existing or administrative data that projects should easily be able to access or collect. An electronic system for reporting these data elements has been developed and is now available.
2) Performance Measures for the “Bridging the Word Gap Research Network program”

To inform successful applicants of their reporting requirements, the listing of MCHB administrative forms and performance measures for this program can be found at: https://perf-data.hrsa.gov/mchb/DgisApp/FormAssignmentList/UA6_2.HTML

**NOTE:** The performance measures and data collection information is for your PLANNING USE ONLY. These forms are not to be included as part of this application. However, this information will be due to HRSA within 120 days after the Notice of Award.

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**vi. Attachments**

Please provide the following items in the order specified below to complete the content of the application. **Unless otherwise noted, attachments count toward the application page limit.** Indirect cost rate agreements and proof of non-profit status (if applicable) will not count toward the page limit. **Each attachment must be clearly labeled.**

**Attachment 1: Biographical Sketches of Key Personnel**

Include biographical sketches for persons occupying key positions. In the event that a biographical sketch is included for an identified individual who is not yet hired, please include a letter of commitment from that person with the biographical sketch. Given the 80-page limit, it is recommended that biographical sketches be no more than two pages in length.

**Attachment 2: Letters of Agreement/Letters of Support**

Provide any documents that describe working relationships between the applicant agency and other agencies and programs cited in the proposal. Documents that confirm actual or pending contractual agreements should clearly describe the roles of the collaborators and any deliverables. Include only letters of support which specifically indicate a commitment to the project/program (in-kind services, dollars, staff, space, equipment, etc.). Letters of agreement and letters of support must be dated.

**Attachment 3: List of Citations for Key Publications**

A list of citations for key publications by the applicant key personnel that are relevant to the proposal can be included. Do not include unpublished theses or abstracts/manuscripts submitted (but not yet accepted) for publication. In consideration of the 80-page limitation, a list of citations only may be included.

**Attachment 4: For Multi-Year Budgets--Fifth Year Budget, (NOT counted in page limit)**

After using columns (1) through (4) of the SF-424A Section B for years 1 – 4 of the five-year project period, the applicant will need to submit the budget for year 5 as an attachment. Applicants should use SF-424A Section B. See Section 4.1.iv of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide.

**Attachment 5: Summary Progress Report**

**ACCOMPLISHMENT SUMMARY (FOR COMPETING CONTINUATIONS ONLY)**

A well-planned accomplishment summary can be of great value by providing a record of accomplishments achieved by the recipient. It is an important source of material for
HRSA in preparing annual reports, planning programs, and communicating program-specific accomplishments. The accomplishments of competing continuation applicants are carefully considered during the review process; therefore, applicants are advised to include previously stated goals and objectives in their application and emphasize the progress made in attaining these goals and objectives. The Accomplishment Summary will be evaluated as part of Review Criterion 4: Impact, and Review Criterion 5: Resources/Capabilities.

The accomplishment summary should be a brief presentation of the recipient’s accomplishments, in relation to the objectives of the program during the awarded project period. The report should include:

(1) The period covered (dates).

(2) Specific Objectives - Briefly summarize the specific objectives of the project as actually funded.

(3) Results- Describe the program activities conducted for each objective. Include both positive and negative results or technical problems that may be important.

(4) Impact – Provide a summary of the impact of the project including the dissemination of findings through peer-reviewed publications as well as other dissemination efforts.

Attachment 6: Evidence of Non-profit Status (Not counted in the page limit)

Attachments 7-15: Other Relevant Documents, As Necessary
Include here any other documents that are relevant to the application. All documents are included in the page limit.

3. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System Number and System for Award Management

Applicant organizations must obtain a valid DUNS number and provide that number in their application. Each applicant must also register with the System for Award Management (SAM) and continue to maintain active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by an agency (unless the applicant is an individual or federal agency that is exempted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)).

HRSA may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time HRSA is ready to make an award, HRSA may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as the basis for making an award to another applicant.

If an applicant/recipient organization has already completed Grants.gov registration for HRSA or another federal agency, confirm that the registration is still active and that the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) has been approved.
The Grants.gov registration process requires information in three separate systems:
- Dun and Bradstreet (http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp)
- System for Award Management (SAM) (https://www.sam.gov)
- Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov/)

For further details, see Section 3.1 of HRSA’s *SF-424 R&R Application Guide*.

**Applicants that fail to allow ample time to complete registration with SAM or Grants.gov will not be eligible for a deadline extension or waiver of the electronic submission requirement.**

### 4. Submission Dates and Times

**Application Due Date**
The due date for applications under this FOA is *May 9, 2016 at 11:59 P.M. Eastern Time*.

See Section 8.2.5 – Summary of e-mails from Grants.gov of HRSA’s *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* for additional information.

### 5. Intergovernmental Review

“The Bridging the Word Gap Research Network Program” is not a program subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, as implemented by 45 CFR 100.

See Section 4.1 ii of HRSA’s *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* for additional information.

### 6. Funding Restrictions

Applicants responding to this announcement may request funding for a project period of up to five (5) years, at no more than $300,000 total cost (direct plus indirect expenses) per year. Awards to support projects beyond the first budget year will be contingent upon Congressional appropriation, satisfactory progress in meeting the project’s objectives, and a determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Federal Government.

Funds under this announcement may not be used for travel outside of the U.S.

The General Provisions in Division H of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2016 (P.L. 114-113) apply to this program. Please see Section 4.1 of HRSA’s *SF-424 R&R Application Guide* for additional information. Note that these or other restrictions will apply in FY 2016, as required by law.

All program income generated as a result of awarded funds must be used for approved project-related activities.
V. Application Review Information

1. Review Criteria

Procedures for assessing the technical merit of applications have been instituted to provide for an objective review of applications and to assist the applicant in understanding the standards against which each application will be judged. Critical indicators have been developed for each review criterion to assist the applicant in presenting pertinent information related to that criterion and to provide the reviewer with a standard for evaluation. Review criteria are outlined below with specific detail and scoring points.

These criteria are the basis upon which the reviewers will evaluate the application. The entire proposal will be considered during objective review.

Review Criteria are used to review and rank applications. The Bridging the Word Gap Research Network has six (6) review criteria:

| Criterion 1. | Need | 10 points |
| Criterion 2. | Response | 20 points |
| Criterion 3. | Evaluative Measures | 20 points |
| Criterion 4. | Impact | 10 points |
| Criterion 5. | Resources/Capabilities | 30 points |
| Criterion 6. | Support Requested | 10 points |

**TOTAL:** 100 points

**Criterion 1: NEED (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Background and Significance**
The extent to which the application describes:

- The current research gaps in early language development and the “word gap,” the gap in exposure to language among children from low-SES families, as compared to children from higher-SES families;
- The national significance and impact of a research network and how multi-site research can address disparities in early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and language development for children from lower SES backgrounds.

**Criterion 2: RESPONSE (20 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Background and Significance; Specific Goals and Objectives; Project Design: Methods and Evaluation**
The extent to which the proposed project responds to the “Purpose” included in the program description. The clarity of the proposed goals and objectives and their relationship to the identified project. The extent to which the activities (scientific or other) described in the application are capable of addressing the problem and attaining the project objectives.

- The extent to which the applicant demonstrates awareness of previous research in the area of this project, including citation of relevant literature and justification of the need for the Network.
- The extent to which the goals and objectives are clear, concise, and appropriate.
- The extent to which the aims of the project will advance scientific knowledge, technical capability, and/or clinical practice or other services and act as a catalyst in developing...
methodology, treatments, practice, services, or preventive interventions that advance the field.

- The extent to which the application describes critical research and methodology that challenges and seeks to shift current research, practice, or service paradigms by utilizing innovative theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions.
- The extent to which a refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions is proposed.
- The extent to which the project addresses the contextual factors for families living in poverty, such as toxic stress exposure, social norms on parenting styles, executive functioning skills, etc.
- The extent to which the applicant describes the plan for developing the multi-level pilot intervention protocol within one year of award of funding; for competing continuation applicant, the extent to which the applicant describes the developed multi-level pilot intervention protocol and includes a detailed plan to implement the protocol developed during the prior project period.
- The extent to which the proposed two studies address multiple contextual levels, including population-level efforts, community-level interventions, and intensive family and individual-level interventions;
- The extent to which the population-level efforts explore using health care settings as a mechanism of providing interventions and information.
- The extent to which the application includes attention to children from lower SES backgrounds who are DLLs.
- The extent to which the applicant addresses and includes information on all activities described in the “Purpose” section for this competition.
- The extent to which the proposed logic model is clear.

Criterion 3: EVALUATIVE MEASURES (20 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Project Design: Methods and Evaluation; Plan and Schedule of Implementation, and Capability of Applicant

The strength and effectiveness of the method proposed to monitor and evaluate the project results. Evidence that the evaluative measures will be able to assess: 1) to what extent the program objectives have been met, and 2) to what extent these can be attributed to the project.

- The extent to which the objectives are time-framed and measurable.
- The extent to which the proposed activities are capable of attaining project goals and objectives.
- The extent to which the plan and methodology for establishing and managing the Network described in the proposal are appropriate, feasible, and of high quality.
- The extent to which a plan to ensure a productive collaboration with all key partners identified in the proposal is clearly defined and described.
- The degree to which a familiarity and experience with data gathering procedures as they relate to collaborative multi-site research are described.
- The degree to which the methods include: (1) a synopsis of the multi-level pilot intervention study that will be developed in Year 1 of the project and plans for implementation; for competing continuation applicant, a brief synopsis of the protocol developed during the prior project period including progress of implementation or plan to
implement the protocol; and (2) a concept proposal for further development during the project period.

- The degree to which measurable evaluation criteria are included for each described objective, with a timeline for evaluation consistent with the plan and schedule of implementation.

Criterion 4: IMPACT (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Background and Significance; Specific Goals and Objectives; Project Design: Methods and Evaluation; Plan and Schedule of Implementation, and Capability of Applicant

The quality of the applicant’s plan for the establishment of a Network and the nature and technical quality of the activities proposed; the significance of the project in terms of its potential impact in creating a multi-site, collaborative, interdisciplinary research network that will lead and promote coordinated research activities to reduce the word gap.

The feasibility and effectiveness of plans for dissemination of project results. The potential impact of project results in improving early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and language development for children from lower SES backgrounds, with a focus on improving “parent/caregiver talk” as well as on child development within the family context.

- The extent to which the project will advance the field with research to improve early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and language development for children from lower SES backgrounds.
- The extent to which there is an effective publication and dissemination plan to facilitate the transfer of Network findings to a broad audience including researchers, health and related professionals, policy makers, educators, and families.
- The extent to which the applicant has a feasible plan for meeting the expectation to produce the expected minimum number of peer-reviewed publications (i.e., at least two peer-reviewed publications per Network study).
- For competing continuation application, the extent to which the applicant describes the impact of the project including the dissemination of findings through peer-reviewed publications as well as other dissemination efforts.
- The degree to which the methods include an effective publication and dissemination plan.
- The degree to which the dissemination plan includes but is not limited to producing at least two peer-reviewed publications per Network study, disseminating information to scientific and professional audiences, and disseminating information through the website and webinars.
- The degree to which the proposal includes other dissemination to the research and practice communities, as well as families and communities that will promote the transfer of findings to improve care.
Criterion 5: RESOURCES/CAPABILITIES (30 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Specific Goals and Objectives; Project Design: Methods and Evaluation; Plan and Schedule of Implementation, and Capability of Applicant

The extent to which project personnel and collaborators are qualified by training and/or experience to implement and carry out the project. The capabilities of the applicant organization and collaborators, and the quality and availability of facilities and personnel to fulfill the needs and requirements of the proposed project.

The PI and project team’s documented history of leadership in the conduct of multi-site, interdisciplinary, collaborative research, and publication record on advancing the field with research to improve early language exposure, vocabulary acquisition, and language development for children from lower SES backgrounds.

- The extent to which the PI, staff, and collaborators are well-qualified by training and/or expertise to develop the infrastructure of the research network and to accomplish the activities of the Network as described in this FOA.
- The extent to which the PI and other key personnel demonstrate current and/or past success in publishing the findings of their research.
- The extent to which the applicant has the existing resources/facilities to achieve project objectives and to successfully support the research network described in the proposal.
- For competing continuation applications, the extent to which the applicant describes their significant experience and accomplishments in attaining the goals and objectives during the previously awarded project period (Attachment 5).

Criterion 6: SUPPORT REQUESTED (10 points) – Corresponds to Section IV’s Plan and Schedule of Implementation, and Capability of Applicant; and Budget and Budget Justification Narrative

The reasonableness of the proposed budget for each year of the project period in relation to the objectives, the complexity of the research and related activities, and the anticipated results.

- The extent to which costs, as outlined in the budget and required resources sections, are reasonable given the scope of work.
- The extent to which budget line items are well described and justified in the budget justification.
- The extent to which time allocated by key personnel is appropriate to achieve project objectives.

2. Review and Selection Process

Please see Section 5.3 of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide.

This program does not have any funding priorities, preferences or special considerations.

Please Note: HRSA may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial instability that directly relates to the organization’s ability to implement statutory, regulatory or other requirements (45 CFR § 75.205). The decision not to make an award or to make an award at a particular funding level, is discretionary and is not subject to appeal to any OPDIV or HHS official or board.
3. Assessment of Risk

HRSA may elect not to fund applicants with management or financial instability that directly relates to the organization’s ability to implement statutory, regulatory or other requirements (45 CFR § 75.205).

Effective January 1, 2016, HRSA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS). An applicant may review and comment on any information about itself that a federal awarding agency previously entered. HRSA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to other information in FAPIIS in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 45 CFR § 75.205 Federal Awarding Agency Review of Risk Posed by Applicants.

A determination that an applicant is not qualified will be reported by HRSA to FAPIIS. (45 CFR § 75.212).

The decision not to make an award or to make an award at a particular funding level, is discretionary and is not subject to appeal to any HHS Operating Division or HHS official or board.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

It is anticipated that awards will be announced prior to the start date of September 1, 2016.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

The Notice of Award will be sent prior to the start date of September 1, 2016. See Section 5.4 of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide for additional information.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See Section 2 of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide.

Human Subjects Protection:
Federal regulations (45 CFR 46) require that applications and proposals involving human subjects must be evaluated with reference to the risks to the subjects, the adequacy of protection against these risks, the potential benefits of the research to the subjects and others, and the importance of the knowledge gained or to be gained. If research involving human subjects is anticipated, recipients must meet the requirements of the HHS regulations to protect human subjects from research risks as specified in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45 – Public Welfare, Part 46 – Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46), available online at http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html.
Rights in Data:
In all cases, whether HHS funded all or part of the project or program resulting in the data, the Federal Government must be given a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license for the Federal Government to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the material and to authorize others to do so for federal purposes, e.g., to make it available in government-sponsored databases for use by other researchers. Additional information on the HHS Grants Policy Statement on “Rights in Data” is available online at http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/hhsgrantspolicy.pdf.

3. Reporting

MCHB intends to update the Discretionary Grant Information System with new Discretionary Grant Performance Measures. As announced in the Federal Register on November 6, 2015 (https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-11-06/pdf/2015-28264.pdf), the DRAFT Performance measures introduce a new performance measure framework and structure that will better measure the various models of MCHB grant programs and the services each funded program provides. The performance data will serve several purposes, including recipient monitoring, performance reporting, MCHB program planning, and the ability to demonstrate alignment between MCHB discretionary programs and the MCH Title V Block Grant program. This revision will allow a more accurate and detailed picture of the full scope of activities supported by MCHB-administered grant programs, while reducing the overall number of performance measures from what is currently used. The proposed performance measures can be reviewed at: http://mchb.hrsa.gov/dgis.pdf. In addition to the reporting on the new performance measures, recipients will continue to provide financial and program data, if assigned.

Pending approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the new package will apply to all MCHB discretionary recipients. New and existing grants awarded on or after October 1, 2016, will be required to report on measures assigned by their Project Officer. Additional instructions will be provided on how to access the new DGIS once it becomes available for recipient reporting. For grant activities funded with 2015 dollars, recipients will continue to report on their currently assigned measures in DGIS.

The successful applicant under this FOA must comply with Section 6 of HRSA’s SF-424 R&R Application Guide and the following reporting and review activities:

1) Noncompeting Continuation Progress Report(s).
   The recipient must submit a progress report to HRSA on an annual basis in order to receive the next year’s funding. Further information will be provided in the award notice.

2) Other required reports and/or products.

   a) Semi-Annual Report. Within six months from the annual award date, the awardee must submit a semi-annual report. Further information will be provided to the award recipient.

   b) Final Comprehensive Report(s). A final comprehensive report is due within 90 days after the project period ends. The final report collects program-specific goals and progress on strategies, core performance measurement data, impact of the overall project, the degree to which the awardee achieved the mission, goal and strategies
outlined in the program, awardee objectives and accomplishments, barriers encountered, and responses to summary questions regarding the awardee’s overall experiences over the entire project period. The final report must be submitted on-line by awardees in the Electronic Handbooks system at https://grants.hrsa.gov/webexternal/home.asp.

3) Dissemination.
The awardee of this Research Network Program will be required to notify their HRSA project officer as soon as they are aware their research is being or has been published. Awardees must report back to HRSA regarding the execution of their dissemination plans as part of the semi-annual performance report, non-competing continuation (NCC) application and the final comprehensive report including but not limited to: peer-reviewed publications, informational products and educational opportunities, including website material, webinars, plenary sessions, abstracts, conference presentations, and consumer materials for key stakeholders such as researchers, providers, communities, states, and families that will promote the transfer of findings to improve care.

Prompt and timely presentation and publication in the scientific literature of Network findings from research and research-related activities is required. As per HHS grants policy guidelines (See “Publications” section on page II-73 at http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/hhsgrantspolicy.pdf), the awardee agrees to acknowledge HRSA support in the publications, presentations, and other products resulting from research and other activities conducted under this program. Peer-reviewed publications are the cardinal measure of success of the MCH Research Program.

4) Performance Reports.
HRSA has modified its reporting requirements for SPRANS projects, CISS projects, and other grant programs administered by MCHB to include national performance measures that were developed in accordance with the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 (Public Law 103-62). This Act requires the establishment of measurable goals for federal programs that can be reported as part of the budgetary process, thus linking funding decisions with performance. Performance measures for states have also been established under the Block Grant provisions of Title V of the Social Security Act, MCHB’s authorizing legislation. Performance measures for other MCHB-funded grant programs have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget and are primarily based on existing or administrative data that projects should easily be able to access or collect.

a) Performance Measures and Program Data
To prepare successful applicants for their reporting requirements, the listing of MCHB administrative forms and performance measures for this program can be found at: https://perf-data.hrsa.gov/mchb/DgisApp/FormAssignmentList/UA6_2.HTML.
b) **Performance Reporting**
Successful applicants receiving HRSA funds will be required, within 120 days of the Notice of Award (NoA), to register in HRSA’s Electronic Handbooks (EHBs) and electronically complete the program-specific data forms that appear for this program at: https://perf-data.hrsa.gov/mchb/DgisApp/FormAssignmentList/UA6_2.HTML. This requirement entails the provision of budget breakdowns in the financial forms based on the award amount, the project abstract and other grant/cooperative agreement summary data as well as providing objectives for the performance measures.

Performance reporting is conducted for each year of the project period. Recipients will be required, within 120 days of the NoA, to enter HRSA’s EHBs and complete the program-specific forms. This requirement includes providing expenditure data, finalizing the abstract and grant/cooperative agreement summary data as well as finalizing indicators/scores for the performance measures.

c) **Project Period End Performance Reporting**
Successful applicants receiving HRSA funding will be required, within 90 days from the end of the project period, to electronically complete the program-specific data forms that appear for this program at: https://perf-data.hrsa.gov/mchb/DgisApp/FormAssignmentList/UA6_2.HTML. The requirement includes providing expenditure data for the final year of the project period, the project abstract and grant/cooperative agreement summary data as well as final indicators/scores for the performance measures.

5) **Integrity and Performance Reporting.**
The Notice of Award will contain a provision for integrity and performance reporting in FAPIIS, as required in 2 CFR 200 Appendix XII.

VII. **Agency Contacts**

Applicants may obtain additional information regarding business, administrative, budgetary, or fiscal issues related to this FOA by contacting:

Tonya Randall, Grants Management Specialist  
Division of Grants Management Operations, OFAM  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 10W09A  
Rockville, MD 20857  
Telephone: (301) 594-4259  
Fax: (301) 594-6096  
E-mail: trandall@hrsa.gov
Additional information related to overall program questions and/or technical assistance regarding this funding announcement may be obtained by contacting:

Robin Harwood, Ph.D.
Health Scientist, Division of Research
Office of Epidemiology and Research
Attn: Bridging the Word Gap Research Network Program
Maternal and Child Health Bureau
Health Resources and Services Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 18N116
Rockville, MD  20857
Telephone:  (301) 443-3888
E-mail: Rharwood@hrsa.gov

Applicants may need assistance when working online to submit their application forms electronically. Applicants should always obtain a case number when calling for support. For assistance with submitting the application in Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov 24 hours a day, seven days a week, excluding federal holidays at:

Grants.gov Contact Center
Telephone:  1-800-518-4726  (International Callers, please dial 606-545-5035)
E-mail: support@grants.gov

Successful applicants/recipients may need assistance when working online to submit information and reports electronically through HRSA’s Electronic Handbooks (EHBs). For assistance with submitting information in HRSA’s EHBs, contact the HRSA Contact Center, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET:

HRSA Contact Center
Telephone:  (877) 464-4772
TTY:  (877) 897-9910
Web:  http://www.hrsa.gov/about/contact/ehbhelp.aspx

VIII. Other Information

Relevant Websites:

MCH Research Website
http://www.mchb.hrsa.gov/research

MCHB Bridging the Word Gap Challenge
http://www.wordgapchallenge.hrsa.gov/

Bright Futures
http://brightfutures.aap.org/

Healthy People 2020
Logic Models:

Additional information on developing logic models can be found at the following website: [http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/programdesign/logic_model.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/programdesign/logic_model.htm).

Although there are similarities, a logic model is not a work plan. A work plan is an “action” guide with a timeline used during program implementation; the work plan provides the “how to” steps. Information on how to distinguish between a logic model and work plan can be found at the following website: [http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief5.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief5.pdf).

IX. Tips for Writing a Strong Application

See Section 4.7 of HRSA’s [SF-424 R&R Application Guide](http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/).

Human Subjects Assurances
[http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp](http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp)

Making Websites Accessible: Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
[http://www.section508.gov](http://www.section508.gov)

Logic Models:

Additional information on developing logic models can be found at the following website: [http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/programdesign/logic_model.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/programdesign/logic_model.htm).

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Appendix: Key Terms for Project Abstracts

(a) Content Terms (maximum of 10)

**Health Care Systems & Delivery**
- Access to Health Care
- Capacity & Personnel
- Clinical Practice
- Health Care Quality
- Health Care Utilization
- Health Disparities
- Health Information Technology
- Home Visiting
- Innovative Programs and Promising New Practices
- Perinatal Regionalization
- Telehealth

**Primary Care & Medical Home**
- Adolescent Health
- Coordination of Services
- Community-Based Approaches
- Integration of Care
- Medical Home
- Oral Health
- Preconception/Inter-conception Health & Well-Woman Care
- Primary Care
- Well-Child Pediatric Care

**Insurance & Health Care Costs**
- Cost Effectiveness
- Health Care Costs
- Insurance Coverage

**Prenatal/Perinatal Health & Pregnancy Outcomes**
- Cesarean
- Labor & Delivery
- Low Birthweight
- Perinatal
- Postpartum
- Pregnancy
- Prenatal Care
- Preterm

**Nutrition & Obesity**
- Breastfeeding
- Nutrition & Diet
- Obesity & Weight
- Physical Activity

**Parenting & Child Development**
- Cognitive & Linguistic Development
- Fathers
- Parent-Child Relationship
- Parenting
- Physical Growth
- Social & Emotional Development

**School Settings, Outcomes, & Services**
- Child Care
- Early Childhood Education
- School Health Programs
- School Outcomes & Services

**Screening & Health Promotion**
- Early Intervention
- Illness Prevention & Health Promotion
- Immunization
- Health Education & Family Support
- Screening
- Sleep

**Illness, Injury, & Death**
- Emergency Care
- Infant Illness & Hospitalization
- Maternal Illness & Complications
- Mortality
- Safety & Injury Prevention
- SIDS/SUID
- Trauma & Injury

**Mental/Behavioral Health & Well-being**
- Bullying & Peer Relationships
- Depression
- Mental Health & Well-being
- Risk Behaviors
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- Smoking
- Stress
- Substance Use
- Violence & Abuse

**Special Health Care Needs & Disabilities**
- ADD/ADHD
- Asthma
- Autism
- Chronic Illness
- Developmental Disabilities
- Special Health Care Needs
- YSHCN Transition to Adulthood

**Life Course & Social Determinants**
- Neighborhood
- Life Course
- Social Determinants of Health

(b) Targeted Population(s) (as many as apply):
- African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic/Latino
- Immigrant
- Low-income
- Native American/Alaskan Native
- Rural
- Special Health Care Needs

(c) Targeted Age Range(s) (as many as apply):
- Women’s Health & Well-being (Preconception/Interconception/Parental)
- Prenatal (until 28th week of gestation)
- Perinatal (28th week of gestation to 4 weeks after birth)
- Infancy (1-12 months)
- Toddlerhood (13-35 months)
- Early Childhood (3-5 years)
- Middle Childhood (6-11 years)
- Adolescence (12-18 years)
- Young Adulthood (19-25 years)