

by conducting technical roundtables for researchers working on special data sets such as child care administrative data from the States. Other opportunities might include training institutes that convene a small number of researchers to work in a guided setting with important national data sets. Support for secondary analysis of various data sets in the CCRCA can be provided through these training institutes as well as through small grants. Support might also be provided for graduate students or postdoctoral fellows to work in residence with archive staff on research related to the holdings.

Workshops and training sessions will be convened at major national conferences. In particular, the CCRCA will conduct sessions at the Child Care Bureau's annual Child Care Policy Research Consortium meeting and its annual meeting of State Child Care Administrators. While some technical assistance activities will be supported through this Cooperative Agreement, others may require outside resources, including other funding partners and fee for service arrangements.

#### Collaboration and Infrastructure Building

The CCRCA will create a national infrastructure for child care research. A major function of this effort will be to facilitate collaboration among researchers to build knowledge, facilitate networking and thematic work across projects; and provide a vehicle for peer technical support and scientific advancement. A related function is to increase interaction and mutual support between the research and policy communities. As researchers try to make their studies more relevant for policy and practice, policy makers will be able to make better use of the findings. These relationships can be nurtured and significantly strengthened through activities of the Technical Assistance and Collaboration component.

The CCRCA will participate as a member of the Child Care Policy Research Consortium and provide limited support for consortium-wide initiatives. The CCRCA will participate in activities of the consortium steering committee and assist with note taking and preparation of summary documents resulting from conference calls, research forums, or major meetings. The CCRCA will support participants in the annual meeting of the consortium with technical workshops and small group discussions, as well as on-site document preparation and organization of materials to lend depth and breadth to the discussions. (Logistical support for the meeting will be supplied by the

Child Care Bureau's Conference Management Center). The CCRCA will also assist with planning for meetings and briefings, coordinating the work of thematic work groups for cross-cutting research, and preparation of proceedings or other summary documents.

As part of this function, the CCRCA will maintain the consortium list-serve, including various subgroups working on cross-cutting themes. In this regard, collaborative efforts may be broadened to include research organizations and individuals outside of the consortium. To support this cross-fertilization of research and partnership building, the CCRCA will set up and manage web-based theme groups of researchers who are working on key issues. Topics of interest currently include early learning and literacy, improvement of quality and development of the child care workforce, child care subsidy and other policy issues, dynamics of supply and demand in child care markets, and family decisions in diverse cultural contexts and socioeconomic conditions.

The CCRCA will also provide limited analytic support to State child care agencies. The CCDF Lead Agencies make difficult program and policy decisions about how services should be targeted and how limited quality funds should be spent. To assist States in making decisions that are informed by the soundest information possible, the CCRCA will translate research findings into briefing papers, power point presentations and other formats. Other forms of support might include statistical analysis of national data sets containing child care related variables and policy research forums.

#### *I. Evaluation Criteria*

Eligible applications will be scored competitively against the published evaluation criteria described below. These criteria will be used in conjunction with the other expectations, priorities and requirements in this announcement to evaluate how well each proposal addresses the Child Care Bureau's research agenda and goals. The point values indicate the maximum numerical weight for each criterion (100 total points).

##### Criterion 1. Approach (40 Points)

The extent to which the applicant's technical approach:

Appropriately links CCRCA goals, objectives, activities and performance indicators to ensure successful operations, ongoing development, and public acceptance.

Demonstrates the ability to effectively implement and coordinate the

functional components of the CCRCA to promote high quality and useful research, make research data and products easily accessible, significantly improve the research infrastructure, and support the Child Care Bureau and its Child Care Policy Research Consortium.

Describes the technical specifications of the information technology system that will be developed or sustained to support the web-based functions of the CCRCA and addresses issues related to ACF information technology requirements for project boundaries, data security, risk analysis, operational concepts, functional requirements, systems design, deployment plans, and performance standards.

Provides a detailed description and rationale for the range of topics to be included in the CCRCA archive, the types of data sets that currently exist and are anticipated; and which among these should be given priority for inclusion in the CCRCA.

Demonstrates an awareness of current activities being undertaken in the field of data archiving, web site management, technical assistance and collaboration; describes how the approach being proposed would build on or coordinate with this work.

Demonstrates an understanding of the technical issues and problems associated with a national data archive; describes the strengths and limitations of existing approaches; and proposes effective solutions to a full range of issues. Important issues include, but are not limited to, multiple archiving of individual data sets; technical problems with data sets such as poor variable definitions, small sample sizes, and missing data; delimitation of public access to data; piecemeal publication of data sets and documents related to a single study; masking of individual identifiers and protection of confidentiality; legal issues of liability; and terms-of-use agreements.

Describes a plan for effectively partnering with other research and data archives, knowledge management, and information systems; funding partners; and research consortia, professional associations, or other relevant bodies whose members represent target users of the CCRCA.

Discusses the relationship of archiving to the protection of human subjects, informed consent, protection from research risks, and Institutional Review Boards (IRB). Addresses the relationship of the funded archive to Institutional Review Boards and the Department of Health and Human Services Office for Protection from Research Risks and Certificates of Confidentiality, specifically.