

INTRODUCTION

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) provides \$4.8 billion in block grants to States, Territories, and Tribes to subsidize the cost of child care for low-income families. CCDF supports early care and education services for more than 1.8 million children each month. Eligible families must meet certain income requirements and must need child care so they can work or participate in approved training or education. CCDF Grantees contract with child care providers or issue vouchers to families, who may select any legally operating provider participating in the subsidy program to care for their children. States establish a maximum rate they will pay providers for the cost of authorized child care assistance under the program. CCDF subsidizes the cost of care up to this rate ceiling; families typically share the responsibility for child care costs by paying a copayment fee directly to their provider according to the sliding fee scale established by the State.

CCDF Plans and the Format of this Report

States and Territories must submit a biennial plan as part of the process of applying for funds from the Child Care and Development Fund.² Lead Agencies submitted Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2004-2005 CCDF Plans on July 1, 2003. The CCDF Plans follow the format established in the CCDF Plan Preprint (Form ACF-118), which divides the Plans into seven parts each corresponding to a chapter in this report:

- Part I – Administration;
- Part II – Developing the Child Care Program;
- Part III – Description of Child Care Services Offered;
- Part IV – Processes with Parents;
- Part V – Activities and Services to Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care;
- Part VI – Health and Safety Requirements for Providers; and
- Part VII – Health and Safety Requirements in the Territories.

Within these seven parts of the CCDF Plan are specific sections based on CCDF statute and Federal regulations. Lead Agencies are required to respond to questions based on guidance in the Program Instruction that accompanies the Preprint (ACYF-PI-CC-03-04). Both the Preprint and Program Instruction are available on the Child Care Bureau's Web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb>. In this report, the questions from the Preprint are provided in italics for the benefit of the reader.

CCDF Plans are public information and are part of the public record. Current Plans, including any amendments, are available from CCDF Lead Agencies, contact information for which is included in Appendix I. Many States make CCDF Plans available on the Web; the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) provides links to CCDF Plans available online at <http://nccic.org/pubs/stateplan/stateplan-intro.html>.

² CCDF Final Rule, 45 CFR Section Parts 98 and 99, Section 98.13, as published in *Federal Register*, July 24, 1998, p. 39984.

Preparation of this Report

The *Child Care and Development Fund Report of State Plans, FY 2004-2005* was prepared by a team of child care and early education experts at NCCIC, under the direction of the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NCCIC reviewed copies of approved CCDF Plans and relevant attachments submitted by Lead Agencies.

This report summarizes CCDF Plans as submitted and initially approved by ACF, and provides a general overview of State and Territory efforts at the beginning of FY 2004 (October 1, 2003). Grantees have considerable flexibility in the administration of CCDF funds and may, at any time during the Plan Period, amend their approved Plan to reflect changes to the CCDF program. The *Report of State Plans* also suggests trends in policies and activities funded through CCDF; this and similar reports for prior Plan Periods are available on the Web at <http://nccic.org/pubs/stateplan/stateplan-intro.html>.

This Report includes information summarized from the Territorial CCDF Plans, marking a departure from past practice. For consistency with prior reports, State counts of policies and practices include both the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. However, in Part VII, which applies only to Territorial grantees, Puerto Rico is included in counts of Lead Agency policies and practices.

The State examples included in the *Report of State Plans* have been excerpted from the CCDF Plans to highlight particular topics. They are intended as samples of the wide variety of activities undertaken by the Lead Agencies and are not meant to serve as best practices or models. In each section, examples are included in alphabetic order by State, then by Territory. Wherever possible, the language used by the Lead Agency in its CCDF Plan has been used verbatim in this report.

The information presented in the *Report of State Plans* reflects the activities and plans ongoing in States and Territories as presented in approved CCDF Plans. The report is not a catalog of all activities undertaken by Lead Agencies using CCDF funds; States and Territories may not report all such activities in their CCDF Plans, which also may be amended during the biennial period. A good source of information on current State initiatives is the National Child Care Information Center, which maintains a list of CCDF Lead Agency contacts on the Web at <http://nccic.org/statedata/dirs/devfund.html>.