

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
	1. Log No: CCDF-ACF-PI-2020-07	2. Issuance Date: November 12, 2020
	3. Originating Office: Office of Child Care	
	4. Key Words: Child Care and Development Fund, CCDF, Quality Progress Report, ACF-218	

Program Instruction

- To:** State and Territorial Lead Agencies administering the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program, as amended, and other interested parties.
- Subject:** This Program Instruction (PI) transmits the Quality Progress Report (QPR) (ACF-218) for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program for the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 and provides guidance for completing and submitting the QPR.
- References:** The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act (42 U.S.C. § 9858 *et seq.*), as amended by the CCDBG Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-186); section 418 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 618); 45 CFR Parts 98 and 99; 81 FR 67438-67595.
- Purpose:** The purpose of the annual QPR is to capture State and Territory progress on how CCDF quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used by States and Territories to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services for children from birth to age 13. The annual data provided will be used to describe State and Territory priorities and strategies to key stakeholders, including Congress, Federal, State and Territory administrators, providers, parents, and the public.

Specifically, this report will: 1) Ensure accountability for the use of CCDF quality funds, including a set-aside for quality infant and toddler care; 2) Track progress toward meeting State- and Territory-set indicators and benchmarks for improvement of child care quality per what they described in their CCDF Plans and those that are of interest to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in measuring CCDF program performance; 3) Summarize how the Lead Agency is building a progression of professional development for child care providers as envisioned in the CCDBG Act of 2014; and, 4) Inform federal technical assistance efforts and decisions regarding strategic use of quality funds.

The data collected in the QPR, including estimated amounts spent on each quality activity, will not be used to determine compliance with minimum quality expenditure requirements included in the CCDBG Act and CCDF Final Rule. Compliance with spending requirements is determined using expenditure data reported in the [ACF-696 CCDF Financial Reporting Form](#).

Because State and Territorial activities vary based on each Lead Agency's system, we recognize that the data may not be comparable across States and Territories. OCC intends to work with the States and Territories to gather any additional contextual information necessary in order to fully understand these data.

Background: Lead Agencies are required to spend a certain percentage of their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) total expenditures on certain activities. In FFY2020, States and Territories were required to spend nine percent of total expenditures on quality activities and three percent on activities to improve the supply and quality of care for infants and toddlers. They are also required to invest in at least one of 10 allowable quality activities included in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014. In order to ensure that States and Territories are meeting these requirements, the CCDBG Act and the CCDF Final Rule require Lead Agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including what types of activities were funded and measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services. States and Territories are also required to report on quality improvement investments through the CCDF Plan, which collects information on the proposed activities for a three-year period; and through the ACF-696 financial report, which collects quarterly expenditure data on quality activities.

In the QPR, Lead Agencies are asked about the extent to which the State or Territory met their measurable indicators of progress as reported in the CCDF Plans, and provide available data on the results of those activities. Because of the flexibility in administering the CCDF program, it is expected that Lead Agencies may not have information and data available to respond to all questions. Lead Agencies may provide narrative updates in the data sections, including any plans for reporting data in the future, if actual data is not currently available.

Revisions: In response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), increased funding as a result of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act or the "CARES Act" (P.L. 116-136), and flexibilities in quality funds that states may have used to support families and providers, updates were made to the form to collect these additional data.

Guidance: State and Territorial Lead Agencies are required to complete and submit the QPR (ACF-218) for FFY 2020 (October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020). Lead Agencies will use an online submission tool to enter and submit their QPR to ACF via the Web. This electronic submission ("e-submission") process has allowed ACF to

embed the guidance and definitions directly into the QPR document and in the e-submission site.

The QPR gathers basic data on the State and Territory goals for quality improvement and on the number of programs and providers benefiting from quality improvement investments. The report is organized according to the 10 authorized activities for the use of quality funds specified in the CCDBG Act of 2014, as included in Section 7 of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan:

1. Support the training and professional development of the child care workforce (as described in Section 6 of the CCDF Plan).
2. Improve the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines (as described in Section 6 of the CCDF Plan).
3. Develop, implement, or enhance a quality rating and improvement system for child care providers.
4. Improve the supply and quality of child care for infants and toddlers.
5. Establish or expand a statewide system of child care resource and referral services.
6. Support compliance with State or Territory requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety.
7. Evaluate the quality of child care programs in the State or Territory, including how programs positively impact children.
8. Support providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation.
9. Support the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development.
10. Carry out other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry.

All sections of the QPR cover the federal fiscal year activities (October 1 through September 30), unless otherwise stated. Data should reflect the cumulative totals for the federal fiscal year being reported unless otherwise stated. In cases where point in time data is used or only partial data exists, Lead Agencies should provide an explanatory note and describe what the data represents. While OCC recognizes that amounts and percentages are estimates, they should be more than just a “ballpark” figure. For any percentages provided, Lead Agencies should provide a description of how the percentage was calculated. For questions about the use of the increased funding awarded in FFY 2018 and supplemental funding awarded in FFY 2020, Lead Agencies should focus on expenditures made during FFY 2020 with the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 funds and the CARES Act, respectively.

Lead Agencies may use data collected by other government or nongovernment agencies (e.g., child care resource and referral agencies or other technical assistance providers) as appropriate. The scope of this report covers quality improvement activities funded at least in part by CCDF. If other funds (non-CCDF) were used in

support of CCDF requirements or allowable quality activities (e.g., early learning and development guidelines), this information should be reported whether or not the funds were administered by the CCDF Lead Agency. Each report section includes a question about whether other, non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds) were used to support that activity. States should report any non-CCDF funds used for the stated purpose (e.g., training and professional development of the child care workforce) whether or not the funds were administered by the CCDF Lead Agency.

Starting with the FFY 2019 QPR, Lead Agencies must describe their progress in meeting their stated measurable indicators of progress for improving the quality of child care as reported in their FFY 2019-2021 CCDF Plan. OCC recognizes that the data requested in the QPR will provide only part of the picture of State and Territory activities to improve the quality of child care because there are many factors that affect the data being collected here. OCC also recognizes that goals may have changed. If this change occurred prior to the end of FFY 2020 (within this QPR time period), the Lead Agency should describe the new goal and the state/territory progress toward meeting this newly described goal. Note, the change must have occurred BEFORE the end of FFY 2020.

Beginning with the FFY 2019 QPR, Lead Agencies must submit an annual report, as required at 45 CFR § 98.53(f)(4), describing any changes to State/Territory regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other State/Territory policies addressing health and safety based on an annual review and assessment of serious child injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible.

Beginning with the FFY 2020 QPR, Lead Agencies must report on a number of new items. Specifically:

- Were CARES Act funds used towards any allowable quality activity? If so, a description of how the funds were used is requested;
- Did the State/Territory set up a grant program designed to sustain the child care supply or provide sustainability funding to child care providers due to the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, a description of the activity and which types of and how many providers were served is requested.
- Did the State/Territory provide cleaning supplies and/or personal protective equipment (PPE) to child care providers either through funding or directly in-kind due to the COVID-19 pandemic? If so, a description of this activity and which types of providers were eligible is requested.

The form and instructions include a glossary section for uniform reporting. For any term not defined in the glossary, Lead Agencies will use their own definition of terms to complete the QPR and describe your state's definition. Additional term reminders and clarifications:

- The definitions of “teacher” and “family child care provider” include assistants/aides
- In item 2.1.3: “People” refers to teachers/providers
- States and Territories should report on their own transparent system of quality indicators even if they do not have a QRIS or do not call it a QRIS even if that is not explicitly stated in the question. Programs that do not have a QRIS rating (because they are not participating OR because the state/territory does not have a QRIS) but are participating in a quality improvement initiative should consider this as “operating another system of quality improvement.”
- When referring to “establishing or expanding” CCR&R, activities related to maintaining a current statewide system should also be reported.
- References to symbols or icons, such as stars or levels, refer to symbols or icons used in a QRIS or other quality initiative to communicate quality levels to parents.
- When referring to “providers” in items 11.1.1 and 11.1.2, please report on the full range of providers who may have received funding even if they are not usually part of the subsidy system.

Submission Deadline: The regular due date for Lead Agencies to report QPR activities is the end of the calendar year, December 31, 2020. Delays in incorporating the COVID-19 revisions to the ACF-218 system necessitate an extension of the regular due date of the FFY2020 QPR. Lead Agencies will be given 30 days after the ACF-218 system becomes active to enter data for the FFY2020 QPR.

E-Submission: Lead Agencies will submit the QPR via electronic submission (“e-submission”) at: https://extranet.acf.hhs.gov/stplan/STPLAN_Login.jsp. This online tool reflects the approved QPR (ACF-218), which was sent for reference purposes only to Lead Agencies on November 12, 2020. In addition to this guidance, OCC will provide additional technical assistance for completing the QPR via the e-submission website.

General Resources for Completing the QPR:

- CCDF Final Regulations (2016)
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/ccdf_tracked_changes_of_existing_regulations.pdf
- CCDBG Law (2014)
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/child_care_and_development_block_grant_markup.pdf
- CCDF Plan Preprint for FFY 2019-2021
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/ccdf-acf-pi-2018-02>
- ACF-218 – Annual Quality Progress Report (QPR)
<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/acf-218-annual-quality-progress-report-qpr>

Inquiries: Please direct any questions to the Child Care Program Manager in the appropriate ACF Regional Office.

/s/

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