ACF-901
American Rescue Plan (ARP) Stabilization Grants Provider-Level Data

Data Standards and File Format

December 7, 2021

Office of Child Care
An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

Objectives

- What is the ACF-901 Report?
- How Many Reports are Due by 1/31/2022?
- When Are Future Reports Due?
- ACF-901 Technical Bulletins
- ACF-901 Data Standards
- ACF-901 File Format
- Future guidance and training opportunities

What is the ACF-901 Report?

- ACF-901 is a new data collection form designed to collect American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Stabilization Grants provider-level data

- This data collection is quarterly, gathering the numbers and characteristics of child care providers receiving stabilization grant awards

- Each state/territory will report a quarterly file for each quarter the state/territory has awarded stabilization grants to providers

- If a state/ territory awarded stabilization grant awards prior to January 1, 2022, the first quarterly data are due January 31, 2022

- The date of when the state/territory began awarding stabilization grant awards will determine how many quarterly files are due by January 31, 2022

How Many Reports are Due by January 31, 2022?

If the state began awarding stabilization grants to providers:

Prior to July 1, 2021
State will submit **three** quarterly files for:
1. April 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021 (Quarter 3 of federal fiscal year FFY 2021)
2. July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021 (Quarter 4 of FFY 2021)
3. October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 (Quarter 1 of FFY 2022)

After June 30, 2021 and prior to October 1, 2021
State will submit **two** quarterly files for:
1. July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021 (Quarter 4 of FFY 2021)
2. October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 (Quarter 1 of FFY 2022)

After September 30, 2021 and prior to January 1, 2022
State will submit **one** quarterly file for:
1. October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 (Quarter 1 of FFY 2022)

If a state/territory did not award a stabilization grant prior to January 1, 2022, they do not need to submit a quarterly file by January 31, 2022.

When Are Future Quarterly Reports Due?

- After the initial data submission in January 2022, states/territories will submit regular quarterly reports for each quarter they award stabilization funds

- Quarterly data are due 30 days after the end of each quarter
  - After the January 2022 submission, the next quarterly file (Quarter 2 of FFY22) will be due by April 30, 2022

- The state/territory can stop reporting ACF-901 data when they have expended their ARP Act stabilization grant funding

- **A state/territory should include a footnote in their last quarterly ACF-901 submission to inform OCC that this is the last quarterly file**

Below is an example of the entire ACF-901 file. It is made up of four record types:

1. **Header Record** – identifies reporting period and other administrative information
2. **Provider characteristics record** – records on providers receiving awards
3. **Award characteristics record** – information for each award received during quarter
4. **Footnotes** – explain anomalous data or provides additional context

ACF-901 Technical Bulletins

OCC has developed two technical bulletins to provide additional guidance on the ACF-901 report:

- Technical Bulletin #15: ACF-901 provider-level record and file format
- Technical Bulletin #16: ACF-901 provider-level data standards

Both Technical Bulletins provide details on the four record types that make up the ACF-901 file:
- header,
- provider characteristics,
- award characteristics, and
- footnotes

ACF-901 Provider-Level Data Standards

ACF-901 Data Standards in TB #16

- **Data Element # and Name**

- **Length:** The size (number of digits or characters) of the data element.

- **Missing Data Standard**: Whether or not the data element is required.

- **Acceptable Range of Values**

- **Internal Consistency Standard**: The standards for consistency among related elements.

- **Suggestions / Guidance**: Provides additional guidance related to each data element.

What you will see in the TB…

Data Element Number	Data Element Name	Length	Missing Data Standard	Acceptable Range Values	Internal Consistency Standard	Suggestions / Guidance
01	Start of Reporting Period	8	Always Required	Format YYYYMMDD: $2021 <= YYYY <=$ current year $01 <= MM <= 12$	Date must be before the date entered for Element #2 – End of Reporting Period	This data element identifies the date of the start of the reporting period. For example, if the report covers October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, this element would be "20211001".
02	End of Reporting Period	8	Always Required	Format YYYYMMDD: $2021 <= YYYY <=$ current year $01 <= MM <= 12$	Date must be after the date entered for Element #1 – Start of Reporting Period	This data element identifies the date of the end of the reporting period. For example, if the report covers October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021, this element would be "20211231".

- Data Element #3 – Total Number of Providers Included
  - *The total number of providers included in this quarterly report, and who received at least one stabilization grant award during the quarter.*
- Data Elements #4a – 4c:

  #4a. State/Territory Point of Contact – First Name

  #4b. State/Territory Point of Contact – Middle Name

  #4c. State/Territory Point of Contact – Last Name

- Data Elements #5a – 5b:

  #5a. State/Territory Point of Contact – Phone Number

  #5b. State/Territory Point of Contact – Phone Type

- Data Element #6 – State/Territory Point of Contact – Email Address

Key Notes about Providers

- States have to assign unique provider IDs to providers who operate across multiple locations
  - Each location that received a grant should be reported with a unique provider ID
- If the provider is operating in **more than one** location and one specific location received the award, the provider characteristic data should speak to that one location (receiving the award)
    - *If the provider has multiple locations that each received an award during the quarter, a provider record for each of the locations should be reported*

Provider Characteristics

Lead agencies must report **either**:

- Data Element #7 – Provider Unique State ID <u>**or**</u>

- Data Element #8 – Provider FEIN

  - *If a record has neither a FEIN nor a Unique State Provider ID, the data related to the provider cannot be processed.*

  - *Social Security Numbers **MAY NOT** be used as the Unique State Provider*

- Data Element #9 – Provider Type

  - *Examples: Licensed Family Home, Licensed Center, License-Exempt Family Home, License-Exempt Center, or Child's Home*

Provider Characteristics

- Data Element #10 – Provider County FIPS Code
  - *The County FIPS code should be a location where child care services are actually delivered, not a location that is solely for administrative offices.*
  - *A list of all FIPS codes can be found at https://www.census.gov/library/reference/code-lists/ansi.html#par_statelist*

- Data Element #11 – Provider Zip Code
  - *Use 5-digit postal codes used by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS): https://tools.usps.com/go/ZipLookupAction!input.action*
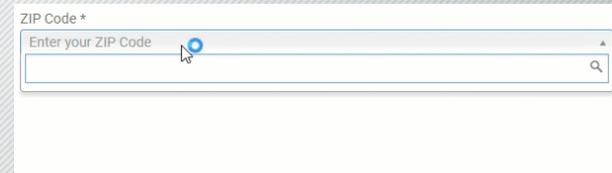
Provider Characteristics

- Data Element #12 – Gender

- Data Element #13 – Ethnicity

- **Data Elements #14 - 18 –** Race
    - *At least one of the races in Data Elements #14 through #18 must be answered*
    - *Acceptable Range Values: "0-1; 9" where:*
        - *0=No*
        - *1=Yes*
        - *9=No response*

Important Reminder: There is distinction in the way these elements are reported
1) *If State did not ask = leave blank*
2) *If the Provider does not respond = select option "9"*

Provider Characteristics

- Data Element #19 – Total licensed or identified capacity

  - *****REMINDER*** *This element represents the total number of children the provider can **SERVE** (not enrollment)*

- **Data Elements #20 - #23** – Infant, Toddler, Preschooler, School-age children licensed or identified capacity

  - *At least one of the age categories in Elements #20 through #23 must have a value greater than '0000' and the value must **NOT** be greater than data element #19.*

Provider Characteristics

- Data Element #24 – Serving children who receive subsidy, at time of application

  - ***GUIDANCE:*** *If the provider, at time of application for stabilization funding, was already serving children who received Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidies, this element should be reported as 'yes'*

  - This definition does not include the broader pool of providers who accept children eligible for CCDF subsidies but were not serving any such children at time of application

- Data Element #25 – Provider temporarily closed at time of application

  - ***GUIDANCE:*** *If the provider was temporarily closed, at time of application, due to public health, financial hardship, or other reasons relating to COVID-19, this element should be reported as 'yes'*

Questions and Answers

Award Characteristics

- Data Element #26 – Award amount

    - ***REMINDER**** *The amount reported is the grant award amount that was dispersed to the provider on the award date (Data Element #27), and not the grant amount at the time the grant was approved.*

- Data Element #27 – Date of award

    - ***REMINDER**** *The award date is the date the grant award amount (data element #26) was dispersed to the provider. This is <u>not</u> the date the grant award amount was approved.*

Award Characteristics (Cont.)

- **Elements #28 – 33** – How the provider plans to use the stabilization grants
    - *Personnel costs*
    - *Rent/Mortgage Facilities*
    - *Personal Protective Equipment*
    - *Purchases of or updates to equipment and supplies*
    - *Goods and Services*
    - *Mental health supports*

Note: An award needs to have at least one usage and as many as all six.

Questions and Answers

ACF-901 File Format

ACF-901 Record Types

The data submission is made up of four (4) types of records:

- **Header** record

- **Provider characteristics** records

- **Award characteristics** records

- **Footnotes**

The data are submitted in a flat (.txt) file with variable length records (or fixed length) uploaded into the **CARS.**

The State included 3,521 providers in the file this quarter.

The **Summary Record** is followed by provider and award records for the quarter. Every provider must have at least one award.

Footnotes are listed last in the file and do not exceed 1,000 characters.

The last character is the **"&"** file delimiter indicating the end of the quarterly file.

- **If the state is missing a data element for a record, blanks should be inserted in its place**. For example, if the state is not reporting _Element #8: Provider Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)_ for one provider, 9 blank spaces should be included in the record in the location reserved for #8

P000000115875549   2,2345208522000101020000000000000000020011A0010000202111170100 10A000800020211208010010$

- **If the state is missing non-required data in the header record, blanks do <u>not</u> have to be inserted, <u>but all delimiters must be included</u>**. For example, if the state is not reporting a phone number for the contact, they would report three (3) delimiters together noting that there is no phone number and no phone type.

H20211001#20211231#0003000#Jane#Ann#Smith###jsmith@dhr.anystate.us$

Numeric data such as counts or dollars should be <u>right-justified in the space allocated for the element, and padded with leading zeros to fill the field</u>. For example, <u>Data Element</u> *#19: Total licensed or identified Capacity* is allocated four (4) positions. If, for example, the total capacity was 300, the amount would be formatted as '0300'. This formatting standard applies to the following elements:

03: Total Number of Providers Included
07: Unique State Provider ID
19: Total Provider capacity
20: Infant licensed or identified capacity
21: Toddler licensed or identified capacity
22: Preschooler licensed or identified capacity
23: School-age children licensed or identified capacity
26: Award Amount

Record and File Delimiters

Record and file delimiters are used to:

1. Identify related groups of data or individual data elements;
2. Mark the end of records; and
3. Determine the length of the file in order to verify that all data the Grantee intended to transmit were received.

Delimiter	Use
H	This is the first character in the file. It signals that a header record follows.
#	Identifies state/territory data elements in the header record.
P	Identifies the ACF-901 provider characteristics data.
A	Identifies the ACF-901 award characteristics data.
$	Marks the end of a quarterly summary record or the complete provider and award(s) record for one provider.
N	Marks the beginning of a footnote.
%%	Marks the end of a footnote.
&	Marks the end of the data submission file. Only one "&" is included with each submission.

Header Record

The **Header Record** includes data on the first six (6) elements, including delimiters. The information identifies the report period and other general administration information, including number of providers and report contact information.

Header Record Example

Example data for quarterly summary record:

- Start of Reporting Period*****: October 1, 2021
- End of Reporting Period*****: December 31, 2021
- Total Number of Providers Included*****: 3,000
- Contact First Name*****: Jane
- Contact Middle Name: Ann
- Contact Last Name*****: Smith
- Contact Phone Number: (703) 555-1234
- Phone Type: Work
- Contact E-mail*****: jsmith@dhr.anystate.us

* Denotes required header data elements

The header summary record is formatted as follows (delimiters are in **bold**):

H20211001**#**20211231**#**0003000**#**Jane**#**Ann**#**Smith**#**(703) 555-1234**#**1**#**jsmith@dhr.anystate.us**$**

An _optional_ field may be skipped if the state/territory does not have certain contact information, but _all delimiters should be included_.

Provider Record

Each record contains:

1. Provider characteristics data: information which applies to the provider that received the stabilization grant award; and

2. Award characteristics data: information on each grant award received by the provider during the quarter.

Each provider should have a FEIN (data element #8) or unique provider ID (data element #7). If a provider operates in multiple locations, each location that received an award during the quarter should be included and assigned a unique provider ID (the same FEIN should not be used for each different location).

Provider Characteristics and Award Data

- **The format for <mark>provider</mark> data will be the same for each record**.

- A "**P**" delimiter is placed before each provider's data to identify the information. Positions 1 through 65 will always contain provider data and associated delimiters.
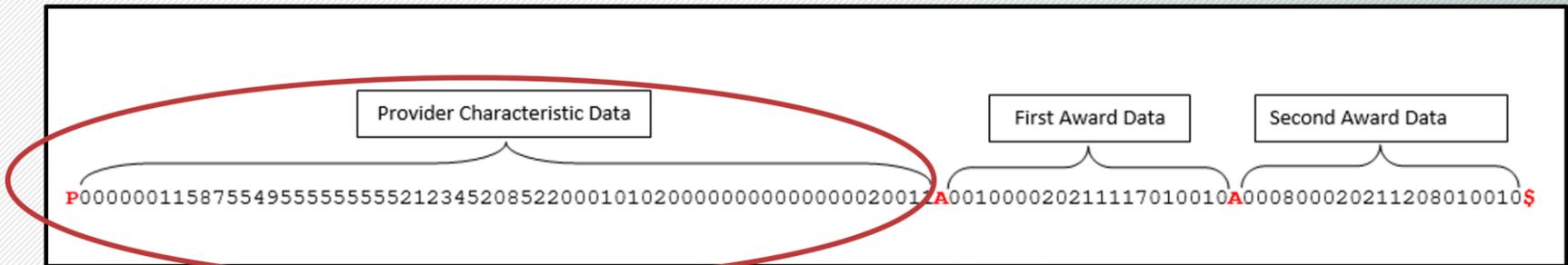
# Provider Characteristics and Award Data (Cont.)

- **The format for <mark>award</mark> data may differ from record to record**, depending on the number of awards received during the quarter by each unique provider. Delimiters are used to identify Award data.

- "*A*" precedes each string of Award data. These data always begin at record position 66 and continue until all of the information for each award received during the quarter is recorded.

  - Additional awards for each unique provider follow the same format, each starting with an "*A*". The format is repeated for each award received by the provider.

- Finally, a "*$*" delimiter is placed after the last award data to mark the end of the provider's record.

The format is repeated for each provider/award combination for the quarter.
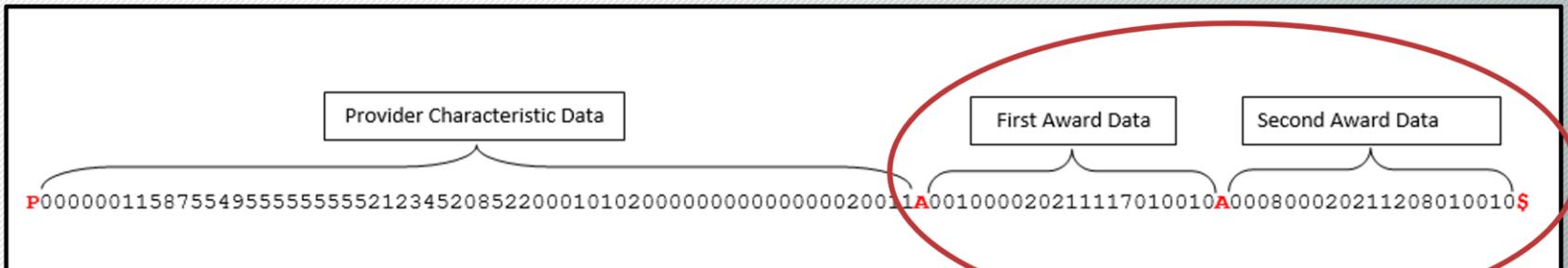
Provider/Award Record Example

In this example, the provider received 2 awards during the quarter (delimiters are in **bold red text**):
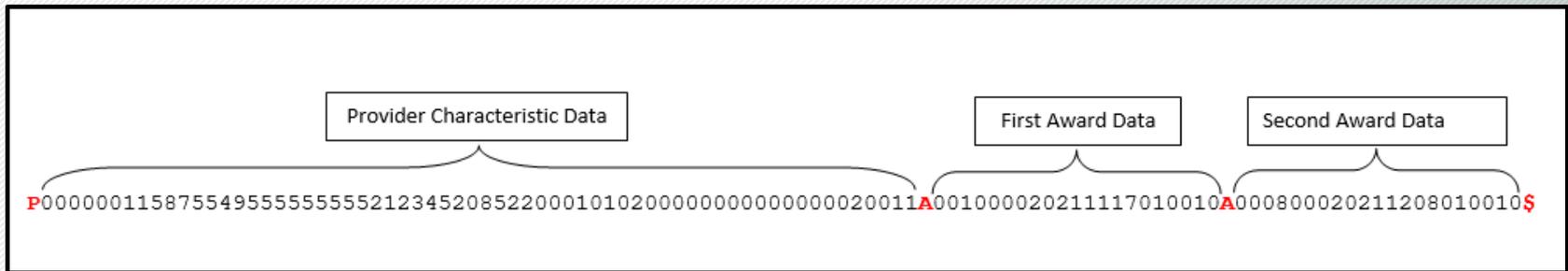
Footnotes

The last submitted record for providers receiving an award is followed by footnotes for the quarter. The footnote should include:

Data Element Description	Data Format	Length	Comment
Delimiter identifying footnote	N	1	This delimiter identifies the following record as a footnote.
Footnote Reference	Number	2	This references the data element for which the state/territory is submitting an explanation. It can range from '07' for the first data element in the ACF-901 (Provider Unique State ID) to '33' for the last data element (Mental health supports). States can also submit footnotes that refer to the whole file. In this case, the reference is '00'.
Footnote Body	Character	1000 characters	The text of the state/territory remarks.
Record Delimiter	%%	2	These characters indicate the end of a footnote record.

Footnote Example

The Lead Agency wants to inform OCC that the state started dispersing stabilization grant funds in Nov. 2021 to explain why there are no records prior to Nov.

N00 The state began dispersing ARP stabilization grant funds to providers in Nov. 2021.%%

The end of the file delimiter (&) should be at the end of the last provider/award records or footnote (whichever is last) to note the end of the quarterly file.

Below is an example of the variable layout of the entire ACF-901 file. The state included 3,521 providers in the file this quarter. The Summary Record is followed by provider/award records for the quarter. Footnotes are listed last in the file and do not exceed 1,000 characters. The last character is the "&" file delimiter indicating the end of the data submission.

Fixed-Length Record Format

States/Territories unable to report in a variable record length format have the option to allocate fixed fields for every submitted record and submit ACF-901 data in the alternative fixed-length format

- The same formatting rules apply;
- State/territory determines a fixed number of awards for their file;
- **Additional delimiter (*)** is used to indicate allocated, but unused space for additional awards;
- An ampersand (&) delimiter is used to indicate the end of the quarterly file.

Fixed-Length Record Format (Cont.)

In this example, the lead agency has decided to use four awards as their fixed-length.

Fixed length Provider/Award Record with one award

P0000001158315494367854322123632085210010010030000000000000000003011A001000020211222010010* ★ ★ $

H20211001#20211231#0003521#Jane#Ann#Smith#(555)555-5555#1#jane.smith@anystate.gov$
P0000001158755495555555552123452085210001010200000000000000020011A001000020211117010010* ★ ★ $
P0000001454758493333333332123522085220010010100000000000100000011A001000020211109010010A000800002021208010010* ★ $
P0000001158766497777777772123812085210101010050000000000000005011A001000020211215010010A000250020211105001010A004000020211009010010* $
P0000001158315494367854322123632085210010010030000000000000000003011A001000020211222010010* ★ $
...
...
...
...
...
N00State began administering grants in November 2021%%
N13State system does not capture "no response" for any provider that did not respond to the ethnicity question. State left the response blank for any providers that did not respond yes or no. %%
&

Footnotes

Fixed length Provider/Award Records

Questions and Answers

Future Guidance and Training Opportunities

How Do I submit an ACF-901 Report?

- The ACF-901 report will be uploaded via the **Child Care Automated Reporting System (CARS) – https://cars.acf.hhs.gov**

- User Roles type that can upload ACF-901 files into CARS:

User Role	CARS Permissions for ACF-901
Lead Agency Certifier	Can Upload/Replace ACF-901 Data Can View Error Report Can View Submission History/Report
Lead Agency User	No Access for ACF-901
Lead Agency View Only	No Access for ACF-901
Tech Submitter (new role for ACF-901)	Can Upload/Replace ACF-901 Data Can View Error Report Can View Submission History/Report

ACF-901 is still
Under Construction

Submitting an ACF-901 File

- OCC will provide detailed guidance in the near future
- In general, lead agencies will be able to
    - select the ACF-901 tile from their CARS home page
    - select the federal fiscal year/quarter they plan to report
    - attach the quarterly file
    - click Submit
- CARS will notify the user if data file has format errors that impact processing of the file
- Lead agencies are able to submit file after format errors are corrected
- Lead agencies will be able to re-submit a quarterly file if correcting data (improving quality)

ACF-901 File Format Testing in CARS

ACF-901 CARS testing: January 3, 2022 – January 10, 2022

- Encouraging states to test their file format during this timeframe

- States will create a separate login for the CARS staging environment through a different URL

- OCC will provide detailed guidance by January 3, 2022

CARS Technical Support
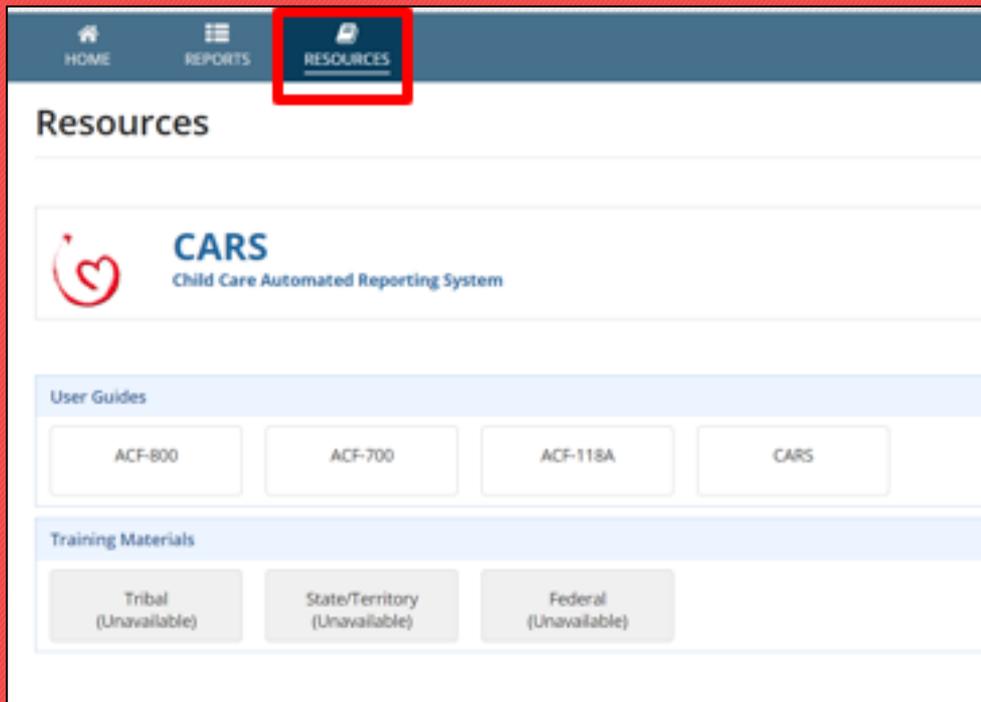
CARS@gdit.com 877-249-9117

ACF-901 Upcoming Trainings

- OCC plans to hold two ACF-901 Office Hour sessions between January 3 and January 14

- OCC will provide specific dates in the near future

CARS Technical Support

CARS@gdit.com 877-249-9117

Resources

CARS Technical Support

CARS@gdit.com

877-249-9117