

Talking Points

Purpose: Tribal child support program directors may use this information on the budget process to educate council or fiscal staff.

- The child support program funding (also known as IV-D) comes from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). ACF is a division of the Department of Health and Human Services. The Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) is the agency within ACF that oversees the child support program. OCSS partners with federal, state, tribal, local governments, and others to promote parental responsibility so that children receive support from both parents even when they live in separate households.
- We may only use these funds for authorized child support activities. The federal regulations at 45 CFR Parts 309 and 310, along with the other regulations and OCSS guidance, provide information on authorized child support activities. Tribal child support expenditures must be allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary. Generally, these funds support the salaries and benefits of staff, office supplies, certain equipment purchases, travel, training, and operating costs for the administration of the tribe's child support plan.
- We are required to submit an annual budget packet to the OCSS by August 1 of each year according to 45 CFR 309.130(b)(2). A budget packet includes the signed SF-424, SF-424A, indirect cost rate, budget justification narrative, and supporting documentation (such as copies of contracts and leases).
- The annual budget is only an estimate. We are not required to spend the entire amount in the budget estimate. Not spending the full budgeted amount does not negatively affect the amount of funds we can request in future years. If there are unexpected expenses during the funding period, we can submit a budget revision for additional funding. Funds not obligated at the end of the fiscal year are returned to the federal government.
- Office of Grants Management (OGM) will issue a Notice of Award (NOA) in early October unless they require additional information. The NOA is available in [GrantSolutions](#). If we are not using GrantSolutions, OCSS will send a soft copy to the tribal child support director. The NOA sets out the amount of the award and the fiscal year we must spend the award. The NOA includes a list of budget categories indicating how much money we requested for each line item in our proposed budget and how much OCSS approved and awarded.
- The NOA references and includes a link to the Terms and Conditions of our award. The Terms and Conditions document contains important information, such as a list of

regulations and policies that pertain to the award and how and when to report financial data.

- While not mandated, we may want to consider submitting our annual budget through [GrantSolutions](#). We can use this automated tool to upload and submit our annual budgets. There are advantages to submitting the budget in this manner, such as the ability to see the status of our application and access the NOA as soon as OGM issues it. If we submit our annual budget by email, OCSS will upload the information into GrantSolutions for processing on our behalf.
- OGM deposits the funds into our Payment Management System (PMS) account, allowing the tribal fiscal office to draw down funds to cover expenses.
- The funding period is the 12-month federal fiscal year (October 1 – September 30). The child support program must obligate (commit) the funds it will use no later than the last day of the funding period. The funds then must be liquidated (spent) by the last day of the following fiscal year (the second year). We must return any funds we do not obligate or liquidate by these dates to ACF.
- There may be times during the funding period when we have to make changes to our budget. We are required to submit a budget revision to request the additional funds.
- The child support program is required to submit reports throughout the year (due quarterly or annually). If we do not submit our required reports timely, we are at risk of having our federal funds suspended. It is important that program and fiscal staff work together to submit required reports on time. OCSS uses our reported data for the Annual Report to Congress, which highlights the significant work we do to support the families in our program.