7/24/2019 Webinar Transcript
A Dozen Policy Questions You Can Answer with Your Agency's Administrative Data
OPRE Report #2019-99

Julia Isaacs:
Well welcome everyone. My name is Julia Isaacs, and I am so pleased to welcome you to this webinar on, "A dozen policy questions you can answer with your agency's administrative data." This is the first in a series of webinars for CCDF Lead Agencies on "Building your capacity as a CCDF Lead Agency to use data in policy decisions."

Today's webinar is brought to you by the Center for Supporting Research on CCDBG Implementation and is cosponsored by the Child Care Administrative Data Analysis Center, also known as CCADAC.

In the next slide, I provide a brief overview of today's webinar. We begin with welcome and introductions. Then I will share some sample policy questions that states have answered with administrative data. I will then turn the webinar over to Kelly Maxwell of Child Trends who will review tips in using administrative data. Then we get to hear from presenters from two states – Massachusetts and Georgia – who will share their experiences in using administrative data to answer their policy questions. Finally, we will have an open discussion based on your questions and reflections. So, I'm going to encourage you to submit questions throughout, using the question box, as explained by our project manager, Eleanor Lauderback, in our next slide.

Eleanor (Ellie) Lauderback:
Thanks Julia. Welcome everyone to the webinar, I'll quickly go through some logistics. First of all, the webinar is being recorded, and the recording will be posted online after the webinar. We have a large group today, about 60 people online at this point, and so I have muted all participants. If you would like to share questions or comments, please type them into the Questions box. I have included a screenshot of the GoToWebinar panel in the slide, highlighting where the "Questions box" is located in blue. We encourage you to send in your questions as it will help make the webinar more interactive. We also would like to know more about who is listening in today, so I will open up a poll and ask you to tell us which of the following groups you fall into.

Julia Isaacs:
Thank you Ellie. As you can see from this poll on your screen, we're asking you to select one of five choices. We're limited to five groups with this technology. Are you, please select one: CCDF Lead agency staff (from any part of the agency), State, territory, tribal or local staff from other agencies, Technical Assistance providers or federal staff (grouping you together for this purpose), External researchers, by that I mean those who are not in a CCDF or other state agency, Or anyone else with a role I haven't yet mentioned.

So please indicate your response on the screen. I'll wait a minute until Eleanor closes the poll and pulls up the results.

So, the poll results show that our audience is:

Ok. Sorry Eleanor, I did something to my screen so I can't see it temporarily. I'll fix that but can you read off what we have?

Eleanor (Ellie) Lauderback:
Yes. So it looks like we have about 37% CCDF lead agency staff, 2% other state/territory/tribal/local agency staff, 35% TA providers and federal staff, 18% external researchers, And 8% others.

Julia Isaacs:
Well, it's great to have all of you on this webinar and thank you for joining us. Now let's go back to the slides. I'll kick-off the formal presentation by sharing a dozen sample policy questions that can be answered with administrative data. To re-introduce myself for those joining late, I am Julia Isaacs, a senior fellow at the Urban Institute and the director of the Center for Supporting Research on CCDBG Implementation. So as the next slide shows, the Center for Supporting Research on CCDBG Implementation is supported through the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and managed through a contract with the Urban Institute And I'd like to thank our project officers, Meryl Barofsky and Alysia Blandon.

So the goal of the Center is basically to support CCDF Lead Agencies in building research capacity, particularly capacity to evaluate the policy changes you are making in response to the 2014 reauthorization of CCDBG.

We have a number of different activities. There's this webinar series, which we're launching today. We've also developed a number of written resources, which I will highlight on my final slide. And you may have heard that we've been supporting grantees that have CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning and/or Implementation Grants. We've been working with about 11 CCDF lead agencies over the past two and a half years. You'll be hearing from the project directors from two of those grants in just a few minutes. We've been talking among ourselves, the 11 agencies, on monthly web meetings and we're delighted to open this up to a larger webinar for all of you.

I'll take the next slide.

Our topic today is administrative data. I want to start with a definition used by Kelly Maxwell and others at CCADAC. "Administrative data is information about children, families, or service providers that is collected and maintained as part of regular program administration." Of course, CCDF administrators and their staff are surrounded by a lot of data on day-to-day operations. Data on licensing, QRIS, subsidy and eligibility payments, and other aspects of program operations. This goal of this webinar is to support you in using those existing administrative data to address policy questions that might come at you from state legislators, agency heads, local child care providers, and other stakeholders. And I thought it might be helpful to consider actual questions that other CCDF lead agencies have addressed with administrative data. I've selected questions that range in complexity. So some of the questions can be answered with just one data set and some will require linkages over time or across data sets.

Let's start on the next slide with sample questions drawing on licensing data.

- First question. Which areas of licensing are most often cited as areas of noncompliance? You might also ask which providers receive licensing citations and what does this imply? And I'll give you a preview that this first question about licensing will be addressed by Jocelyn Bowne, our speaker from Massachusetts.

- Next question on licensing, question 2. What are the characteristics of licensed providers in the state? For example, I know South Carolina asked the question what percentage of nonprofit licensed providers have a religious affiliation? In response to a question they (the state) had gotten from a policymaker.
- Third question. How do characteristics of licensed home-based providers change after implementation of the various state policies you are adopting in response to the 2014 Act? You might wonder how licensed home providers overall changed and then particularly look at the changes among those serving children with subsidies. I have put a star to indicate that to look at those serving children with subsidies, it would require linked administrative data to link your licensing data and your subsidy data so it would be a little bit more complex. But, some version of this question is probably of interest to a number of you, as there is changes in the home-based providers and it's important to track how their numbers and their characteristics may change with the implementation of new policies.

Now I wonder if any of you have suggestions of other questions that can be addressed with licensing data. If you have an example of something you're working on or done in the past, please type it in the questions box. And then when I finish with my dozen examples, I'll ask Ellie to help me share some that you have typed in.

But moving on in the next slide, I'm going to share three questions related to QRIS data. Again as a preview, Randy Hudgins, who will be our speaker from Georgia will be sharing how his agency has analyzed QRIS data to help answer some operational questions.

- Okay our next sample question is, "Is the quality of programs participating in QRIS improving over time?"
- My fifth sample question, "What are the characteristics of programs that improve their QRIS ratings over time?
- And number six, "Do more high-quality providers participate in the subsidy program after implementation of higher tiered reimbursement rates? And this last question I star because it requires linking your QRIS data to your subsidy data.

Now again, I would welcome you if you would like to share a question that you have addressed using QRIS data. Just type it into the questions box. I'll pause a moment to let you think and type.

On the next slide, we have questions that can be answered with subsidy data:

- I think I'm up to question seven. "To what extent has implementation of 12-month eligibility impacted the number and/or characteristics of children and families enrolled in the subsidy program?" I know some lead agencies have been wondering whether some categories of children may decline if other families are staying on for longer periods. Of course we don't know if families are staying on for longer periods and that's my obvious next question:
- Question 8. "How has the implementation of 12-month eligibility impacted subsidy spell length?" And I star this one as a more complex question, which requires developing longitudinal files, where you link your subsidy data across many months, where you define subsidy spells, when are families receiving subsidies and which months is there non-receipt. So, whereas with question 7 you could probably answer just by comparing your subsidy population at two different points in time and learn something interesting about whether there were changes in

the number or characteristics of families. If you want to look at subsidy spell length, you would need to do some more complex analyses of linked-longitudinal data.

- And question 9, the last question on subsidies. "Which subgroups of families and children demonstrate the greatest levels of instability?"

Again a more complex question because requiring longitudinal data and sometimes these analyses are done where you link the subsidy data to additional data like earnings records to really learn more about family characteristics. And of course to do this one you have to come up with a definition of instability, which I could imagine being done a couple of different ways.

So if you have other questions you are analyzing using subsidy eligibility or subsidy payment data, please type them into the Questions box.

Okay, the next slide shows my last 3 questions of my dozen, and I draw on 3 other types of data because of course you have lots of datasets. For example, if you have access to a workforce registry with decent data, you could ask:

- Question 10. "What are the credentials of the early care and education workforce?"

- Or, next question, if you have a partnership with CCR&R, you could find out, "What are the child care needs of families seeking help from CCR&Rs?"
- And, if you have data that tracks technical assistance, you could ask: "What are the characteristics of teachers and family child care providers who receive onsite technical assistance? "

So I've included these questions to remind you of the diversity of data sets you have available, and of course that means that there are all kinds of different kinds of questions the data can help you answer.

Okay, I've been talking for a while, so with my final slide, I'd like to get to the first audience participation segment. I've pulled these from briefs and things, showing real examples of what lead agencies have done but perhaps you have additional examples. Some of you may have already shared them earlier, but others, could you take a minute to type them into the Questions Box.

And Eleanor, could you read out, do we have any sample questions that have been submitted to date?

<u>Eleanor (Ellie) Lauderback:</u>
Yes, we do, so the first question is about licensing and QRIS data.

- The question is, what is the relationship between FCC and QRIS in comparison to closures of FCC? And that's a project they're starting soon it looks like in Minnesota.
- And then another question we got, what are characteristics of families selecting different types of child care?
- And then I can do one more. Minnesota is also currently connecting CCAP child-level data to see the percentage of Minnesota CCAP children in QRIS?

<u>Julia Isaacs:</u>
Thank you Eleanor. That first one with the relationship of family child-care with QRIS, I bet Minnesota's not the only state that's curious about that. That's a great example of a question. Any others, Eleanor, before I turn it over?

Eleanor (Ellie) Lauderback:
No, nothing else right now.

Julia Isaacs:
Okay, well thanks everyone for sharing those. Now from the next slide you'll see that in a minute I'm going to turn this over to Kelly Maxwell, who's the Co-Director of Early Childhood Research at Child Trends and project lead for the Child Care Administrative Data Analysis Center (CCADAC). Many of you may know Kelly, who has worked with states on early childhood evaluations for more than 20 years. Over to you, Kelly.

Kelly Maxwell:
Thanks Julia. I'm happy to be part of this webinar today and I'm going to share some tips with you about using administrative data.

Next slide please.

As Julia mentioned, I lead a project called CCADAC—which stands for the Child Care Administrative Data Analysis Center.
CCADAC is supported by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families, in the US Department of Health and Human Services, with funds set aside for research in the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act. CCADAC is part of a larger contract with Child Trends to support child care and early education policy analyses. Ivelisse Martinez-Beck is the OPRE project officer for the contract.
The primary purpose of CCADAC is to support the use of administrative data to address policy-relevant early care and education questions for state child care administrators and their research partners. I'd like to thank Kathleen Dwyer and Jenessa Malin, our OPRE team leaders for CCADAC, for their support and guidance throughout this project.

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I will begin by highlighting a few benefits of using administrative data.
First, it's relatively low cost because it's data that the agency is already collecting, so you don't need to collect new data.
Second, it's the only source of information for some questions. If you want to know who's receiving a service, for instance, administrative data is likely the best source.
Third, the agency has staff who are knowledgeable of the data—program staff who use the data can help interpret analysis, and IT or data staff who understand the particular data elements in the dataset. This in-house knowledge can make it easier to analyze and interpret the data.
Another benefit is that you likely have access to data from multiple years to document changes over time. You could, for instance, examine data about the number of licensed family child care providers over the last 5 years to determine whether there has been a decline in these providers over time.

I have listed on this slide a few examples of possible sources for administrative data that could be used to address policy-relevant questions. Julia already mentioned the first three—licensing, subsidy, and QRIS. Other early care and education data sources include: pre-K, Head Start, workforce registries, Child Care Resource & Referral, and Technical Assistance data. There are also data sources outside of early

care and education that might be helpful, and I've listed two here—Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The CCADAC team has a forthcoming resource that describes these and other administrative datasets that CCDF staff could use to address policy questions.

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All data have limitations, and I have listed 4 possible limitations in using administrative data.
The first is that data quality varies. Staff may be great about consistently entering data for some data elements, and others might be messier. When you're considering answering a question with administrative data, it's important to understand the quality of the data elements you're considering so that you can choose the data elements you have the most confidence in. When selecting data to analyze, you may want to consider a few things like whether there is a document that describes each data element or whether there are procedures for checking for possible errors in the data.

A second common issue is limitations in the data systems themselves. Many states have older data systems, or some systems that were built at different times so they may not easily talk to one another. When analyzing administrative data, it's important to work within the constraints of the data system—and you may need to think creatively to overcome some challenges. If, for example, it takes a long time for an external vendor to run a report with some data, there might be something that staff in the agency can run to provide at least some of the relevant information for you.

A third issue is that there may be limited documentation about the data. If you're analyzing the data and you are not familiar with it, you might need to find the right person who knows the data well enough to help you decide which data elements to use and how to interpret the findings.
Finally, administrative data are limited to program participants. If you have a question about the low-income families who participate in the child care subsidy system, then administrative data are perfect. If, on the other hand, you'd like to know about all of the low-income families who are *eligible* for child care subsidies, then it's important to acknowledge that the administrative data tell you about some of those families—but not all of them.

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This slide includes a few tips in using administrative data.
The first tip is to match the data with the question. Start with your question and then review the administrative data to determine which data elements might be useful in answering the question. If the data don't quite address the question, then you might have to tweak it to ensure that it's something that can be answered with the data. For example, if a legislator asked you, "What's the quality of child care programs in our state?"—you likely don't have quality information on ALL the programs in your state. You might have to revise the question to something like, "What percentage of licensed programs participate in the QRIS?" or "Of those early care and education programs participating in QRIS, what's the distribution of programs at each rating level?"

Second, work closely with program and data or research staff. Program staff understand the program well and know why particular data are important. They may also be the ones entering the data—or supervising those who enter the data—and know about the quality of data and can tell you which data they trust and don't trust. Data or research staff often have the skills to extract the data, combine it, run

reports, and analyze the data. So when using administrative data, both types of staff will likely need to work together on the project.

Third, include the limitations of the data when reporting it. The data may not cover all programs in the state or may only be available for certain years. Note those limitations in any report or presentation to help people appropriately interpret the findings.

And finally, develop a plan for linking data, if needed. As Julia mentioned, some questions will require combining information from multiple data sets—though it depends in part on how your data system is structured. If you need to link or combine data, then work closely with someone who has done this before as well as program staff who know the data well. Together, you can determine the feasibility of linking the data and determine how best to match programs or people across the multiple datasets.

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I thought it would be helpful to point you to some resources that can help you address some of the issues in using administrative data to answer policy questions. The CCADAC team has developed several resources that are available on the OPRE website. The slide title has a hyperlink to take you to the landing page. And I'll briefly mention a few resources. We have a resource to help determine whether it's feasible to use administrative data to answer a question of interest. Once you determine that it's feasible, there is another resource that describes some considerations in getting ready to analyze administrative data—like preparing a dataset. A third resource describes common components of a data sharing agreement, outlines steps in developing an agreement, and includes a few examples. The final resource on this slide describes three research partnerships between state agencies and researchers, provides examples of questions answered by those partnerships, and describes the benefits and challenges of establishing a strong research partnership.

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Finally, I want to let you know that the CCADAC team hosts an online discussion forum to support peer learning among researchers who are using—or interested in using—administrative data. So if you're interested in this topic, I hope you will join the forum and ask questions, share resources, and offer your own tips. Everyone is welcome! I have included the hyperlink on this slide. You can also email me if you have questions about this.

Thank you--and now I'll turn it back to you Julia.

<u>Julia Isaacs:</u>
Thanks, Kelly. As you can see, I'm going to move onto the next slide. Our first state speaker will be Jocelyn Bowne, who is the Director of Research and Preschool Expansion Grant Administration in the Massachusetts Department of Early Care and Education (EEC). Jocelyn coordinates a number of grant-funded initiatives that support research and data use at EEC, including the CCDBG Implementation Evaluation and Research Planning Grant. She also manages a grant initiative which funds local efforts to increase access to preschool and build program quality and alignment. Now, as Jocelyn is speaking, do remember, if you have questions you can type them into the Questions box, and Eleanor will share them with us at the end during the open question session. Now, over to you, Jocelyn.

<u>Jocelyn Bowne:</u>

Thank you Julia. You can go to the next slide.

As Julia mentioned, I work at the Department of Early Education and Care, which is responsible for a number of functions; licensing of private early education programs across the state, of both center-based as well as family child care, developing and managing the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System, otherwise known as the QRIS, administering child care subsidies and managing a number of grants that support program quality in different ways.

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The policy question I will be discussing today is "where do providers struggle the most to meet licensing and QRIS standards?" And to provide the policy context and motivation for the question, it's important to understand that EEC is currently in the process of revising our QRIS system and wants to create a new professional support system that is aligned with the expectations of the new QRIS but we also want to make sure we're meeting the needs of programs in our system. And in doing so, we want to be sure that we understand the challenges that programs face at multiple levels of our system, including challenges with basic licensing compliance, which we see as the foundation for quality, as well as potential challenges presented by the expectations of the new QRIS.

In this presentation I will share two different, relatively straight-forward analyses we conducted, one using our licensing data and one our QRIS data. And, as I will discuss, the results have informed the ongoing development of the QRIS as well as our work with two primary partners, the StrongStart Career Pathways grant, which is going to all the community colleges in the state in support of providing better pathways to degrees and competencies to individual educators, and the StrongStart Training and Technical Assistance grant, otherwise known as the SSTTA, to a local university to provide statewide training and technical assistance, both to individuals and to programs.

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Our first analysis considered what we might learn from our licensing data to understand the aspects of licensing compliance that have been most challenging to programs. To do this we reviewed 3 years of licensing citations from all visits to understand the most commonly cited regulations. EEC has 8,281 licensed programs, or at least they did at the time that the sample was taken, and the sample includes about 97,000 citations. So that's an average of 4 citations per program per year although some programs did not have any citations and some had many more than that. And when we look at the citations, as you can see from the pie chart here, the largest category of citations, 27%, were for administrative issues, 23% were for health and safety violations, 22% were for physical facility violations. Following these larger categories, 8% were for teacher qualifications, 6% respectively for ratios and supervision as well as curriculum and interactions, 4% for nutrition issues and another 4% of miscellaneous violations across remaining categories.

So to make sense of the implications of these findings for professional support needs, we wanted to check our understanding of what the data was telling us by seeing how licensors viewed these violations, and whether the pattern that we see here was at all surprising to them or to understand whether they felt that there was more information we needed or whether there was particular ways they would like help in supporting programs. We brought these results to the Regional Directors (RDs) and asked for their reactions. And they weren't surprised to see these results but they did feel that

licensors could provide TA effectively on some of the largest categories of citations around concrete compliance issues, such as administration and qualification, physical facility and some of the health and safety violations. These were violations that really required fairly concrete guidance surrounded by organizing student or staff folders, the depth of mulch in the playground or proper labeling of bleach bottles. On the other hand, the RDs felt that issues such as problems with ratios and supervision, curriculum and instruction, although they showed at a lower frequency, tended to reflect more serious issues that a program might have and required more in-depth support than they could provide. And this is also true of some health and safety violations. As a result, rather than focusing on the highest frequency violations and thinking about how we could meet the licensors' needs we're seeing, we have considered ways to provide the supports requested. In addition to developing courses related to health and safety for a new learning management system, (which is designed in part for CCDBG compliance so there is overlap there), we are also ensuring that these key topics are addressed through the SSTTA grantee offerings and that licensors have the ability to refer programs directly to these supports.

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Our next analysis looked at our QRIS data, which, in our current system, is fairly limited. The system was designed solely to manage the application process, is old enough that it is difficult to update to align with new requirements and does not collect much information about programs beyond the steps taken to be granted a new level. We have some program information about program type, enrollment and whether the program is part of a larger agency. And we have information about application status and activity, which includes timelines and any exemptions granted, which I will explain in a few minutes. And finally, we have the level granted as a result of each application. And while we would like to review a really rich profile of all the different dimensions of program quality that programs have shown, as well as see the results of some of the standardized classroom observations we collect, we really wanted to think about how we could work with the data that we had.

And before I get into the solution, just to give you a sense of the scale of our QRIS, it is a 4-level system and currently 63% of our programs participate (which is up from just over 50% a few years ago). Most of the participating programs are at level 1 – that's 63%, while 29% are at level 2 and only 5% at level 3 and 4. These last two levels are the hardest levels to achieve as they have far more stringent expectations and also include the use of external standardized observations of quality with the ERS tools.

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So, as we were puzzling over these issues, Katie Gonzalez, a Harvard fellow who was working with us, proposed that we could use the exemptions taken as part of this process as a window in the current barriers for programs. To understand the exemption system, programs are allowed to request up to 4 exemptions to particular verification criteria to move to level 2 and above. Katie reviewed the full history of exemptions taken through May 2017 at the point at which each application was processed. For this sample, she looked at all programs in the QRIS at the time, 5,245, and all 7,342 exemptions requested – so over half the programs moving through our QRIS system have been granted at least one exemption.

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In looking at the exemptions (to understand current barriers to advancement as well the potential barriers the new QRIS system we were planning might set up), we categorized the exemptions to better understand the patterns. Workforce-related exemptions were those taken around educator qualification requirements at different levels. For example, 50% of educators are required to have BAs for advancement to higher levels of the QRIS. There were also exemptions around formal PD requirements – which include a fairly extensive set of requirements for particular trainings, all of which have to be CEU bearing, that are expected of educators and directors.

We also categorized some criteria as aligned with what we're calling QRIS 2.0, it's a system that we are currently planning. We are moving to a system with fewer rigid requirements and greater support for programs' continuous quality improvement efforts. The QRIS 2.0 category includes the use of observational tools, a program's continuous quality improvement plan, individual educator professional development plans and the use of child screening and assessment data.

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When we look at where the bulk of the exemptions fall, we find the majority are related to workforce requirements (with 51% related to workforce qualifications), while 25% related to formal PD requirements. Only 8% related to the QRIS 2.0 aligned requirements and 4% were in another miscellaneous category, (which included physical facility requirements, which are a particular challenge for family child care programs). These results were reassuring to us as they support our belief that the new QRIS system will be less onerous to programs, but also highlight the challenges the field continues to face with a limited pipeline of teachers with degrees and access to PD opportunities; and these are issues we wanted to ensure we could continue to address in supportive ways with our new system.

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So, to summarize the conclusions we've drawn from these two analyses is that, for the QRIS, the movement towards more flexible training and competency-based qualifications will hopefully remove some barriers in our current QRIS. The new QRIS is also adding increased expectations and support to programs around using curriculum effectively and ensuring educators have access to job-embedded professional learning, which should help to address some of the more irksome challenges that licensors have noted in working with programs. And, as I added, we are creating a direct connection between licensors and these supports so licensors can refer programs about whom they're particularly concerned. The professional support system will also include our collaboration with community colleges, through the Career Pathways grant, in providing accessible coursework and more extensive articulation to degrees, such as through a new CDA program, which we'll articulate. We are very aware of the challenge and the importance of moving teachers toward CDAs, but want to address it on the supportive end. The TA and the coaching provided by our SSTTA grantee will be required to address topics identified as a need by EEC and by program request, and most importantly, will provide coaching to program leadership in program management and providing job-embedded learning opportunities for educators, which we hope will also address both our desire to build quality in meaningful ways but also address some of the issues noted by licensors.

So the review of these different sets of data points provided information that both supported and expanded our design of our professional support system, and our review of the QRIS system, which is currently in process. Thank you, I'll turn it back to you, Julia.

Julia Isaacs:
Well, thank you, Jocelyn. That was a lot to take in but I appreciate it and I appreciate how pulling from two different data sets and really using the data helped to refine the development of the new QRIS and the new professional development system. Okay, if you have questions for Jocelyn, type them in, we're not going to take them yet. With our NEXT SLIDE, we're going to turn to Randy Hudgins, who is the Director for Research and Policy Analysis with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. His team manages departmental research and performs administrative analyses that support program leadership in implementing policy. He also manages the CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Grant that is currently funding research focused on understanding the child care landscape in Georgia. Okay, Randy, I'll turn it over to you.

Randy Hudgins:
Great, thank you, Julia and good afternoon everyone.

We can skip to the next slide.

As Julia mentioned, I'm with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, which houses many of the state's early childhood services. Similar to Jocelyn in Massachusetts, this department is responsible for licensing child care across the state, developing and managing the state's QRIS, which we refer to as Quality Rated, and administering Georgia's universal Pre-K program. We also administer CCDF subsidies through our Child Care and Parent services, what we usually refer to as CAPS, as well as the federal nutrition programs across the state. The Department is fortunate to also house a small Research and Policy team, of which I'm a part of, that consistently uses administrative data and research to help inform policy decisions and strategic planning initiatives like I'm going to talk to you about today.

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So today, I am going to briefly talk with you about our 2020 goal and how the research team is working with program and departmental leadership to dig into our administrative data to inform how we can best utilize our resources to support providers through Quality Rated and our CAPS programs. We presented these analyses at a recent strategic planning meeting in May where we had the opportunity to think critically about the challenges and opportunities that are around this goal. Our 2020 strategic goal is stated, "To continue receiving CCDF Subsidy, all Quality Rated-eligible providers will be star rated by December 31, 2020."

The question that we are really trying to answer with our administrative data here is simply, "How do we market Quality Rated to providers to ensure children receiving CCDF subsidy are in quality environments by the end of 2020?"

So, as of May of this year, 61% of children receiving subsidies were already in Quality Rated care and 50% of CAPS providers were already Quality Rated. We know that we are on track to meet this goal, but we need to know more about how to leverage our resources to best communicate and incentivize providers receiving CAPS to become Quality Rated. Our team looked at administrative data through five different lenses to try and help the department strategically consider the data and how different provider settings, communities, and the overall process of becoming Quality Rated may impact a provider's decision to become Quality Rated. It is important to note that for all eligible-providers, becoming Quality Rated is still a voluntary process in Georgia.

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For the strategic planning meeting we discussed in length the administrative data through these five categories shown here: (1) How are providers going through the Quality Rated Process, (2) what do Superusers look like, (3) How may that be different from a Family Child Care, (4) Geographically, are there areas of the state with low Quality Rated participation but have high subsidy usage, and (5) What does this all mean for the families receiving subsidy. We want to know "Are there different approaches we can take to incentivize or communicate to different groups about becoming Quality Rated?"

Today, I am only going to share with you examples of administrative analyses from two of these vantage points: (1) Data around the Quality Rated Process – how providers actually go through the process, from application, receiving technical assistance, to achieving a star rating; and (2) Data about "Superusers" – or those centers that provide care to a substantial number of children receiving subsidies.

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First, I'll share examples about how our providers navigate the process of becoming Quality Rated. This is a visual representation of the current process. A provider begins the process simply by signing up and submitting an online application to participate. A provider then begins receiving technical assistance and professional development incentives through our Resource and Referral Agencies across the state who help prepare providers to meet the expectations of Quality Rated. A provider must complete a structural quality portfolio demonstrating that they have gone above and beyond the minimum licensing requirements. This part of the process is entirely dictated by the provider. After submitting their Portfolio, DECAL schedules an Environmental Rating Scale observation, or an ERS observation, with that provider. The structural quality and the ERS score are then reviewed and summed to issue a provider's star rating. This part of the process is dictated by DECAL's ability to process the ratings.

In Georgia, we have a 3-star system, in which 3 stars indicates the highest quality. Every year providers are required to verify this information in their portfolio and, every three years, providers are required to resubmit through the entire process and are issued a new star rating at that time. So all programs must go through this process in Georgia.

Next slide.

This slide shows data from our recent Validation Study that Child Trends worked with us on. The full reports can be found on our agency website. The study used administrative data from December 2017 and found that programs took, on average, about a year, or 373 days, to go through the application and portfolio process of becoming rated. These are the sections of the rating process that individual programs have direct control over.

This is important because all programs must go through this initial process to become rated. So, how can we help providers (specifically those with subsidy) navigate this process more efficiently to ensure that they are Quality Rated in the next one and a half years? For example, much of this data we collect is self-reported in a portfolio and there may be other ways to capture the information, such as collecting classroom ratios during licensing monitoring visits instead of through a self-reported portfolio.

Next slide.

This slide also shows data from our Validation Study using administrative data from 2017. We found that it was taking DECAL almost four months to rate providers after their portfolio was submitted. It was taking about 14 days for us to approve portfolios, another 54 days to complete the ERS observations, and another 47 days to review and issue a final rating. While our QR division has already taken steps to address and significantly reduce the time between portfolio submission and rating, we recognize that this is a specific area of the rating process that DECAL has direct control over and may be able to reduce further. So the question here becomes, what operational changes can DECAL make to more efficiently process ratings to ensure that all eligible providers with subsidy are Quality Rated in the next year and a half?

Next slide.

This last slide I want to share concerning the Quality Rated Process has helped us to think more critically about how we are engaging CAPS providers who may be struggling to complete the initial process. Using administrative data from this past May, we found that 39% of CAPS providers who started an application but have not yet submitted a portfolio applied within the last year. 22% of CAPS providers started an application more than a year ago, 12% more than 2 years ago, and 27% started an application 3 or more years ago but have not yet submitted their portfolio to become Quality Rated. You can easily imagine how each of these four groups, particularly the 39% that recently started versus the 27% that started an application 3 or more years ago may have different reasons for not submitting to be rated. And there are likely different approaches the agency should be taking to incentivize or communicate the importance of becoming Quality Rated by December 2020.

Next, I will dive into the Superuser data and how we used our administrative data to communicate to our program leadership the uniqueness of large centers.

Next slide.

So, in Georgia, there are about 3,083 licensed child care learning centers in May, of which about 71%, or 2,184, are CAPS providers and nearly 97% of all CAPS children are served in center-based care. Therefore, in terms of our 2020 goal of having all children receiving subsidy in a Quality Rated provider, assisting these centers through the process is critical. Fortunately, through our administrative data we found that, as of May, centers who are CAPS providers are more likely to have a rating. 50% of CAPS providers are rated compared to only 27% of centers not serving CAPS.

Next slide.

Superusers for our purposes are defined as centers serving more than 50 children receiving subsidy. We found, using May data, that 135 of our largest unrated centers serve 45% of our targeted children—nearly 11,000 children receiving CAPS—each serving more than 50 children receiving CAPS subsidies.

122 of these Superusers have applied and are somewhere in the process of becoming Quality Rated but have not yet received a rating.

13 Superusers have not chosen to apply for Quality Rated yet. This is a particularly interesting group, when you think about how DECAL can communicate and incentivize providers to becoming Quality Rated. These providers are choosing to missing out on large tiered reimbursement rates for subsidy payments by not being Quality Rated, and with a large portion of their license capacity serving children

with CAPS, we thought higher reimbursement rates would strongly incentivize these providers, however we see it is not true at all. So, what are the barriers and what would make it worth it for these providers to become rated?

Also on this slide, we see that 57 Superusers have Georgia's Pre-K, so how can we leverage the provider's participation in other DECAL grant opportunities to encourage and communicate the importance of Quality Rated?

And finally, 65% of Superusers are in the metro Atlanta counties. So, it may be important to dig further into what are geographical barriers and how can we communicate to our metro providers differently than some of our more rural providers. Also, are there partnerships within the metro area we need to be leveraging to better communicate and incentivize these particular providers?

So, here I have briefly touched on some of the administrative data we are currently using to help our programs align policies and promote quality to meet our state's 2020 strategic goal. We only looked at two categories of data, Quality Rated Process and Superusers, but you can imagine how we can use similar techniques to look at administrative data in terms of the Family Child Care, geographically across the state, and especially in terms of the individual families receiving and relying on child care subsidies. Thanks for listening and I look forward to your thoughts. Take it away, Julia.

Julia Isaacs:
Thanks, Randy. So, on our next slide, I think we're going to see that we're opening it up to your questions and comments. And so, if you have a question, just type it into the Question Box. So, Eleanor, are there any questions that came in already while Jocelyn, and Randy, and Kelly were speaking?

Eleanor (Ellie) Lauderback:
Sure, I can read this one. How long does it usually take to develop a data sharing agreement?

Kelly Maxwell:
This is Kelly, I'll start. I can start answering that and then if Jocelyn or Randy has other experiences they can jump in too. Of course, I don't have a perfect answer for that, because I think it depends on various things, like whether your agency has a template for creating a data sharing agreement, and the number of people who have to review and approve a data sharing agreement. In general, though, I think it could take anywhere from a few months to over a year or more to finalize one. So, I would encourage anyone who's thinking about doing research that would require a data sharing agreement to begin developing it as early as possible, knowing that it might take you several months.

Julia Isaacs:
Jocelyn or Randy do you want to add anything to that?

Jocelyn Bowne:
No, I think that sums it up. You know, from my perspective, it's just very dependent on staff capacity and what else is happening within the agency at the moment. And we have a small legal team so I can see how time-consuming it can be to get something like this done on occasion.

Randy Hudgins:

Yeah, and I would completely agree with Jocelyn and Kelly, it just kind of depends on your relationship with who you're partnering with and your relationship with your legal department, whether they're big or small.

Julia Isaacs:
Great, well, while we're waiting for more questions, I think I'm going to ask a question for, I guess both Jocelyn and Randy: I'm curious whether those administrative data analyses that you did, did they confirm what you already knew, or did they have any sort of surprises or new insights. So, my question is, were there any surprises from your analysis of administrative data?

Jocelyn Bowne:
So, I can start. I was personally surprised by the number of exemptions that programs are taking to move through the QRIS. I knew that that was an option, I did not realize how frequently it was an option that programs took up. And I very much appreciate Katie's work in thinking about how becoming aware of that is a very real and important data source to look at and also thinking about the ways in which it showed us a window into places where programs are really getting stuck and would not be able to move through the QRIS if they didn't have that exemption option.

I'd also add, in thinking about the licensing analysis that we did, I was hoping for more information about some of the more instructionally-focused aspects of licensing, so around thinking about curriculums and interactions in the classroom. And what was interesting to me was to learn more through the conversations with the regional directors and others. I had surprising conversations with licensing staff as well, just around how those regs were cited. Curriculum tended to be cited as an overall broad category. Licensors didn't get into any of the sort of sub-categories of the regulation that they could've cited and they tended to cite that just when they saw complete chaos, whereas I think when you look at some of the administrative data there are far more nuances in the way things were cited. So, it was just really interesting to learn more about that data, how it's used and think about what we might learn from it.

Julia Isaacs:
Well, let me jump in before turning back to Randy, that Jocelyn, one thing that your analysis showed is you had some data and then you shared those data with the licensors. So you shared it with people…we've been talking about that, those of us that meet monthly, how useful it can be to find not a 50-page report of data, but to find some key data findings and then share them with a group of stakeholders and you learn so much by hearing their reflections on the data that you have analyzed and shown them. Randy, were there any surprises in your administrative analyses you showed us or did it confirm what you kind of already knew?

Randy Hudgins:
I'd say a little bit of both. It was certainly surprising the reactions we got from the different program staff who saw this data. I think for a lot of people, it confirmed a lot of assumptions. But as we've been able to share these with other program staff who are actually doing the work, when we talk about the quality rated process data, when we showed these to the different program staff involved in the different stages of the quality rated process, it was interesting to see how certain staff thought that their process was going quickly but didn't have the full picture of this entire year process for a provider. So it really helps connects the dots for our program staff who may be implementing the program, but didn't have a good perspective of the overall program, or how actual providers were experiencing the system.

Julia Isaacs:
Yeah, that's another great example of…it isn't that you're doing a data analysis and it's sitting on a shelf, it's that you're doing a data analysis and then sharing it with people and they're learning from that and then you're also learning. Eleanor, do we have any questions or reflections from the webinar participants?

Eleanor (Ellie) Lauderback:
We do not right now.

Julia Isaacs:
Well I guess I get to ask another question then. Although please, we will welcome your questions too. I was wondering, again for Jocelyn and Randy, although Kelly you can feel free to jump in on this one from all your experiences, but my question is, I imagine, (I'm not going to go out on a limb here), there are some challenges getting the administrative data ready for analysis. Could you describe a challenge you encountered, and what you did to overcome it?

Jocelyn Bowne:
Sure. So, I did not find the licensing regulation data to be the easiest to work with. I suspect Massachusetts is not unique, that the regulations are not necessarily completely coherently organized, and licensors were citing by regulation. So even though you can think about organizing them like you would a table – where there's a category of regulations and then a set of regulations and then kind of sub-regulations under each of those. It was very tricky to think about what level we would report at and how we might create coherent categories, which ultimately led to the decision to stay at the very high level of organizing categories and not try to dig more deeply into some of the nuances of the data we collected, which is also a piece of the motivator for talking to licensors about it because we didn't want to lose the richness of the experience and some of the more detailed understanding of the issues that were leading to these problems. But it was very challenging to figure out how to get that out of the data that we had.

And the other piece I would add, just as an aside, that analysis was done a couple of years ago. We've moved to a new licensing system and I actually have not yet been able to figure out how to get that data out of the new system in this format, by regulation. So, it's something we're still working on but the change in the system somehow changed how the data was stored and how we could access it in ways that make it harder to find this information in this format.

Julia Isaacs:
Well, I'm imagining heads nodding around the country as people…you're not the only one, I'm sure, who has a new data system and then finds it hard to replicate an analysis they did with the old data system. I hear you say you're still working on it in getting the data out of the data system. Randy, do you have any challenges you'd want to share getting the administrative data ready for analysis?

Randy Hudgins:
Yeah, and I would really echo Jocelyn on two of those, the deciding at what level we'd want to report the data at is always a big consideration and you can easily get into the weeds too far if you're not careful. And then making sure that the data that we do decide to represent, we put it into coherent categories of a data analysis that will make sense to the program staff we're sharing it with.

Something specific to this data is that we had to link three data sources; our QRIS data, our licensing data and our subsidy data. Fortunately, a lot of that is kept in house so we've been able to do that for a while now, so we have some expertise in that, but that's definitely a barrier for a lot of people. But then, just on a more general scope, figuring out the best way to represent this data so that we could present it during a strategic planning meeting in a way that leadership across the department who have varying levels of understanding of the different programs can understand and can use was definitely a challenge that we had to deal with, with this data. Being able to draw out of a large dataset, and being able to condense it into a few slides that you can share with leadership can be difficult at times.

Julia Isaacs:
Well I really appreciate that last response because I think some of us who get all into data analysis and all the fancy things you can do with data. You know, we think our job's done when we've analyzed the data so that we know what it says, which is a very hard job, pulling the data. But then figuring out how to present it to leadership. It's important to build time and think of that as a skill to facilitate data-driven conversations you want to have. Kelly, you didn't speak about a specific analysis today, but did you want to mention any challenge, either a common challenge or a specific challenge you've encountered using administrative data?

Kelly Maxwell:
Well I think I'll just make one point to make a plug for having some kind of documentation for your data. I think you've heard both Randy and Jocelyn talk about needing to figure out which data to include in the analysis. Part of that is understanding what the various data elements are on a topic and which ones likely have the best quality data. And many times that lives in someone's head in the agency. And it would be ideal if that information living in someone's head could be included in a document so that it could be referenced for anybody in your agency, or a research partner if you choose to use one, can use to understand the data elements so that they can be sure to match the question of interest with the available data. And I know that staff have a lot of things on their list so this may be a lower priority, but I'll just put a plug for that and also say that if you do have any students or researchers who are interested in working with CCDF agency staff, this could be a task you could ask for their help on.

Julia Isaacs:
I appreciate that suggestion. So, I didn't say at the beginning, but we are scheduled to go another fifteen minutes, but we will end early depending how many questions we have. Eleanor, do we have any questions that people have typed into the questions box?

Eleanor (Ellie) Lauderback:
No, we don't have anymore.

Julia Isaacs:
Okay. I think I will ask, so, Kelly you shared some resources that are on CCADAC. Do you want to say a minute more about other resources using administrative data so that people, in addition to this webinar, have places to go to after the webinar?

Kelly Maxwell:
Sure, thanks Julia. The use of administrative data is increasingly popular and there are increasingly more and more resources available. The challenge sometimes is figuring out where to find those. So, a few years ago, CCADAC started working with the team that supports the child care and early education Research Connections website to organize the resources and put them in one place. So, if you go to their

website, which is the Child Care and Early Education Research Connections website, and click on the research tools tab, you'll see a drop down box and one of the options in that drop down box says working with administrative data. When you click on that, it will take you to a page of resources on using administrative data and the resources are organized into various topics like linking administrative data or data confidentiality and security. So, after this webinar if you're working on research using administrative data and you have a question, I would really encourage you to google Child Care and Early Education Research Connections, go to their website, and find the page on working with administrative data and you'll likely be able to find a resource to help you. And I will also remind you that you can join the online discussion forum, because we're hoping that that is also a place where if you have a question, you can ask other researchers and other folks who are analyzing administrative data a question and get a response from the other people's experiences.

Julia Isaacs:
Great, thank you Kelly. And I will, when I get to my final slide, include another place of resources. But, before I turn to my last two slides and final announcements, I'd like to ask if anyone in the panel wants to make a closing comment? And I guess we'd go in order, I don't know if, Kelly, that may have been your closing comment and you want to make another one, and then Jocelyn and then Randy.

Kelly Maxwell:
I'm fine, I don't need to say anything else. I appreciate the opportunity to be on this webinar.

Julia Isaacs:
Oh, we are so happy that you were able to join us. Jocelyn, did you want to add anything for folks?

Jocelyn Bowne:
Yeah, I think that we've talked a lot about understanding the data and the data quality and the one piece of that I think I would like to add is that it's important to understand who's entering the data and for what purpose, because that has a lot of ramifications for data quality as well. One example that I can share is when you look at the licensing data, there are all sorts of fields that the licensors can enter, some of which are required for them to do their job as a licensor, and others which are extra information that somebody somewhere along the way thought it would be really helpful if licensors collected. So, for example, you can get information about whether a program is a Head Start program or not from our licensing data, but there's no reason that licensors care particularly, in terms of the way they do their job. So, there is an awful lot of missing data in that field and I think that people could probably come up with a number of other, similar examples. But I just want to put in a plug for having a sense of where the data is coming from to inform thinking about the quality of the data that you have.

Julia Isaacs:
Thank you. Randy?

Randy Hudgins:
No, I just appreciate the opportunity to be on the call today and look forward to working with other states as we move forward. Thanks again.

Julia Isaacs:
Well I thank you, Randy and Jocelyn and Kelly, for great presentations and for this informal conversation afterwards, which I find almost as useful as the formal presentations.

So, I'd also like to thank those of you who are listening in, and in the next slide, we have two slides left, so next slide, I want to make sure you know about the upcoming webinars in this series, "Building Your Capacity as a CCDF Lead Agency to Use Data in Policy Decisions". Each webinar will cover a different data and research skill. This first webinar has started, we thought it was the starting point, with your own administrative data. The second webinar, we titled it "Mapping Answers to Child Care Questions: Comparing Your Administrative Data with Other Data", including Census Bureau data. So you can see where you're meeting the need and where there's unmet need. We plan to schedule that for the fall. I've gotten two of the speakers confirmed today, I'm happy to say, but I'll wait until we have them all and we find a date and we'll send out that information to those of you who registered for this and try to make it widely available. And then we will hold at least one more webinar in the winter or spring of 2020, on a topic to be determined.

Now in our final slide, I want to highlight some resources that we developed at the Center to support CCDF Lead Agencies to support you building your research and evaluation capacity. So I'm most excited that just this week, we have an updated version of our annotated bibliography, it's called: *Research and Evaluation Capacity Building: A Resource Guide for Child Care and Development Fund Lead Agencies (Revised 2019)* .

And we issued one a year ago but we just issued a revised one this week. There are so many resources out there in the world, so to get you started, we provide a very concise, annotated list of written and on-line resources that might be relevant to child care agencies. For example, we share five resources to help you work with evaluators and more than two dozen resources related to working with administrative data, including that webpage that Kelly just mentioned. So, you can find it on the OPRE website or on the website for the Center. And we'll also plan to send it out to those of you who have directly registered for the webinar. I think you'll get an email tomorrow.

Other resources, which also can be found on the OPRE web page and our Center web page. We have a self-assessment tool and session guide. It's called*, Research and Evaluation Capacity: Self-Assessment Tool and Discussion Guide for CCDF Lead Agencies*. A really great way to do self-assessment. How are you in your research evaluation capacity? Where do you want to build more? Where are the gaps? Where are your strengths? We also have done a brief on *Evaluating Training and Professional Development for Home-Based Providers.* And we're working on a brief that's not out yet, but which will be about procuring research and evaluation services. So that gives you a sense of the types of resources on our webpage. You can google Center for Supporting Research on CCDBG Implementation and that will pull up the Urban webpage.

So finally, if you have questions or comments on this webinar series, feel free to email me, Julia Isaacs, and my email address is jisaacs@urban.org. And I guess I'll close. Another thank you to Eleanor Lauderback and behind the scenes, Teresa Derrick-Mills, who's the associate director of the Center and to all of you for helping us kick off our first webinar in this series. Thank you.