



Child Care Helps America Work and Learn



Administration for Children & Families

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Recovery Act Improves Access to Quality, Affordable Care in Tribal Communities

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this fifth issue of the Child Care Bureau's *Child Care Helps America Work and Learn* series, which illustrates both the diversity of American Indian and Alaska Native communities and the myriad of child care needs that they have addressed using funds made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act).

Tribes across the country are investing Recovery Act funds to address critical health and safety needs, improve access to professional development opportunities for providers, upgrade indoor and outdoor child care environments, and expand access to services for low-income families. Tribes are using the additional funds, and the flexibility inherent in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), to increase income and age eligibility thresholds, decrease parental co-payments, and raise provider reimbursement rates. Additionally, Tribal child care programs are partnering with Head Start and Early Head Start programs, braiding and blending a variety of funding streams, and engaging partners at Tribal colleges and universities and State and local agencies.

This year marks 20 years since Tribes first began receiving direct funding from the Federal Government for child care. It is an honor to highlight the innovative initiatives that Tribal CCDF programs are undertaking in this celebratory year.

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Tribes Use Recovery Act for Direct Services to Low-income Families

- 93 families of the **Yakama Nation** (in Washington) continued to receive child care financial assistance thanks to Recovery Act funding, enabling 118 parents to stay in the workforce.
- The **San Carlos Apache Tribe** (in Arizona) hired 4 additional staff for its new child care center in the Bylas District of the reservation.
- The **Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe** (in South Dakota) eliminated parent co-payments for families at or below the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.

Recovery Act Funds Help Tribes Raise the Bar on Professional Development

The infusion of funds from the Recovery Act has helped many Tribes increase staff training and professional development opportunities. Tribes have targeted these training dollars to different program areas.

Some Tribal CCDF programs, such as the **Bois Forte Reservation Tribal Council** in Minnesota, focused on helping child care staff members earn Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials. In 2009, to align the staff qualifications for its co-located child care and Head Start programs, the **Suquamish Tribe** in Washington mandated that all child care staff would obtain CDAs within 1 year of starting work. The Tribe partnered with Northwest Indian College to make courses available onsite at the early childhood center. To date, the Tribe's Recovery Act funds have helped 10 child care staff earn CDAs; the remaining 6 staff members will complete their credentials by the end of 2010.



Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island

Other Tribes have focused their professional development efforts on improving the quality and availability of infant and toddler care. The **Blackfeet Tribe** of Montana used Recovery Act funds to support infant and toddler training for 12 child care providers. Child care teachers working for the **Oneida Tribe of Indians** of Wisconsin began classes needed to obtain the Wisconsin Infant/Toddler Credential. Thirteen staff members of the H'man Shawa Early Childhood Development Center at the **Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation** in Arizona received training about child development and early learning standards for children birth to 3 years. The center is a newly consolidated program that provides all children with comprehensive services based on the Early Head Start performance standards, using funds from Tribal CCDF, Tribal prekindergarten, and First Things First, Arizona's tobacco tax initiative.

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Tribes Invest in Child Care Health and Safety

Throughout Indian Country, Recovery Act funds are making improvements in the health and safety of child care settings.

A number of Tribes, including the **Fort Belknap Community Council** (in Montana), used Recovery Act funds to provide CPR/first aid and other basic health and safety training courses to help new providers meet licensing standards.

In Michigan, the **Sault Sainte Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians** purchased safety equipment and training materials to help tribally regulated providers meet health and safety standards, as did the **Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians** in North Dakota.

Several programs invested in playground safety. The **Smith River Rancheria** in California purchased materials for a subsidized center to improve the quality of its outdoor play area and enhance safety around the play structures. In Oregon, the **Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Indians** upgraded the ground cover used on the playground at its early childhood center; the new pourable recycled rubber product will improve children's safety while reducing maintenance time and expense.



Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in Montana

New Activities and Supplies Brighten Tribal Child Care Programs

Using funds from the Recovery Act, Tribes are improving the quality of care and education provided by their child care programs in a number of ways. For example:

- The **Pokagon Tribe of Michigan** used some of its Recovery Act funds to purchase playground equipment, as well as new toys and other classroom materials.
- The **Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma** invested in several quality activities, including a new initiative that offers providers mini-grants to help them institute a program that increases school-age children's physical activity and teaches the children how to make smarter nutritional choices.
- The **Hoopa Valley Tribe** in California purchased supplies for cultural activities in its child care classrooms.

CCDF Highlights in Indian Country Recovery Act Investments Enhance Child Care

- Two Tribal CCDF grantees used Recovery Act funds to address some of the transportation challenges facing rural native families. The **Jamestown S'klallam Tribe** in Washington State and the **Quapaw Tribe of Oklahoma** both purchased buses to help transport children to and from their child care programs.
- The **Quechan Indian Tribe** of Arizona extended Head Start services to CCDF-eligible children. In November 2009, the Tribe opened a new classroom for fourteen 3-year-old children who had been on the Head Start waiting list. The classroom, funded and operated through CCDF, was developed to meet Head Start standards.
- The **Kenaitze Indian Tribe** in Alaska expanded its Early Childhood Center's wraparound child care program to serve children ages 3 to 5. The extended operating hours has improved the continuity of care for Kenaitze preschool children. Care for medically fragile children has been improved as well by eliminating the need to transport medications and medical equipment and streamlining communication among parents and caregivers.

Nationwide, 259 Tribes and Tribal Organizations were allocated \$40,000,000 in CCDF Recovery Act funds.

ABOUT THE RECOVERY ACT

The **Recovery Act** (Public Law 111-5) provided \$2 billion in supplemental funding to CCDF for grants to States, Territories, and Tribes for child care assistance to low-income families and investments for improving the quality and availability of child care. **Section 1512 of the Recovery Act** requires recipients of Recovery Act funds to submit quarterly reports detailing the use and impact of the funds, including jobs created and retained. The reports are available to the public at www.recovery.gov.

About the Child Care Bureau

The **Child Care Bureau** administers the **CCDF** program, a multibillion-dollar Federal and State partnership to support access to high-quality child care for working families. The Child Care Bureau helps States, Territories, and Tribes administer their CCDF programs through program support, policy guidance, technical assistance, and research.