

Office of Child Care (OCC) Monitoring Process: Overview

Lead Agency Administration of CCDF Program

Each State designates a Lead Agency to administer the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program. Under the CCDF regulations, Lead Agencies have considerable flexibility in how to operate the program, including through contracts and agreements with other governmental and non-governmental agencies. Regardless of the State's method of implementation, the Lead Agency retains overall responsibility for the administration of the program. Under the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act and the CCDF regulations, the federal Office of Child Care (OCC) has responsibility for monitoring the Lead Agency for compliance with the Act, the Final Rule, and the State's approved CCDF Plan. OCC monitoring includes the review of State's policies, rules, etc., as well as the observation of how the CCDF program is implemented on the ground. A State's compliance with the CCDF regulations is determined based on the practices implemented at the time of the onsite visit.

OCC Monitoring Goals

- Ensure compliance with CCDF regulations and approved CCDF Plan
- Identify technical assistance (TA) needs to meet CCDF requirements
- Identify promising practices to inform continuous quality improvement

Guiding Principles for Monitoring Process

- **Transparent:** Engage States throughout the process and ensure clear communication of expectations
- **Supportive:** Identify TA as part of the monitoring process
- **Efficient:** Make use of existing grantee information and simplify other required pre-visit documentation

Areas Monitored for Compliance

During the first three-year monitoring cycle (Federal Fiscal Years 2019-2021), States will be monitored for compliance within 11 topic areas. Within each topic, there are specific CCDF regulations for which the States will be required to demonstrate compliance. The topics are:

1. Disaster Preparedness, Response, and Recovery
2. Consumer Education: Dissemination of Information to Parents, Providers, and General Public (Monitoring Reports and Annual Aggregate Data)
3. Twelve-Month Eligibility
4. Child:Staff Ratios and Group Sizes
5. Health and Safety Requirements for Providers (11 health and safety topics)
6. Pre-Service/Orientation and Ongoing Training for Providers
7. Inspections for CCDF Licensed Providers
8. Inspections for License-Exempt CCDF Providers
9. Ratios for Licensing Inspectors
10. Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting
11. Program Integrity and Accountability
(Note that OCC's goal in monitoring Program Integrity and Accountability is not to gather data on Improper Payments; that is a separate information collection and requirement for States. The goal of monitoring these regulations is to understand what internal controls and systems the State has in place to help ensure program integrity.)



Who Should Be on the State Monitoring Team?

States have flexibility to determine the composition of their team to support the monitoring effort. OCC recommends that State Administrators involve other state-level CCDF leadership in the pre-visit and onsite phases of the monitoring process, including trainings and planning calls with the OCC Monitoring Team. It may be worthwhile to bring other partners (contractors, other State agencies, etc.) into the planning process early as well so that everyone is aware of the goals and expectations for the onsite visit.

State Monitoring Team

- State Administrator(s)
- State staff (subsidy, licensing, consumer education, & professional development managers)
- State partners, subrecipients, and others as determined by the State

OCC Monitoring Team

- OCC Federal Staff (Regional and Central Office)
- Monitoring contract staff (WRMA, Inc.)

Three Monitoring Phases

The OCC monitoring process is divided into three phases over several months: pre-visit planning and document review, the three-day onsite visit, and post-visit documentation and compliance determination. Throughout the process, the State and its CCDF team work closely with the OCC Monitoring Team.

1. Pre-Visit	2. Onsite	3. Post-Visit
<p>Planning Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal of Compliance Demonstration Approaches • Planning Calls with OCC Monitoring Team • Submission of Desk Review Materials • Collaborative Site Visit Schedule Development 	<p>In-Person Data Collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State, Local, & Partner Interviews • Demonstrations of State Systems • Provider and Subsidy Case File Reviews 	<p>Closeout Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Collection follow-up, if further clarification is needed • Analysis of Data Collected • Convene Virtual Exit Conference with State • Issuance of the Monitoring Report



What Happens During Onsite Data Collection Sessions?

The majority of the onsite visit will be spent in data collection sessions, which provide the OCC Monitoring Team a comprehensive understanding of how the State is implementing the CCDF topics/regulations being monitored. They also validate evidence collected during the pre-visit phase by demonstrating State practices in action on the ground. Onsite data collection sessions may include:

- Staff/partner interviews;
- Demonstrations of program operations, systems, websites, and resources; and
- Guided reviews of family and provider case files.

Data collection sessions may occur at the Lead Agency's office or at partner/local office locations. Sites are selected during the pre-visit phase in consultation with the State based on a variety of criteria (e.g., the State's CCDF organizational structure, geographic and demographic considerations, and the availability of case files, whether paper or electronic). Prior to the visit, the State will know the topics to be discussed and activities to be conducted at each location.

How Should the State and Partners Prepare for Onsite Data Collection Sessions?

- Ensure that State staff and partners are aware of the regulations being monitored within the 11 topic areas and have been oriented to the purpose and scope of OCC's monitoring system. Those participating in data collection sessions should know the specific topics and regulations to be covered and the the format of the sessions (interviews, demonstrations, etc.). This will help ensure all participants are well prepared.
- Ensure that adequate meeting space is available at the site. The OCC Monitoring Team may include 5-7 people who will need space to take notes and review documents. Access to power outlets and Internet is helpful, but not required.
- Prepare system/process demonstrations. These do not need to be elaborate or lengthy. The OCC Monitoring Team will want to get a basic understanding of the process workflows and system functions. Specific family or provider records may be reviewed, as appropriate.
- Prepare selected family/provider case files for guided reviews. The State will select or request cases that meet specific requirements identified by OCC. Partner staff should be prepared to walk the OCC Monitoring Team through these cases, showing how the CCDF and State regulations and processes were implemented in each case. There is no need for any specific preparation or copying of paper case files.

