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Child Care and Development Fund

Program Instruction

To: Tribal Lead Agencies administering child care programs under the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 1990, as amended, and other interested parties.

Purpose: This Program Instruction (PI) informs Tribes and Tribal Organizations of the process for obtaining Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Tribal Mandatory and Discretionary Funds.

References: The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (CCDBG), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 9858 et seq.; section 418 of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. § 618; 45 CFR Parts 98 and 99.

Background: Federal regulations at 45 CFR 98.81 require Tribal Lead Agencies to apply for CCDF funds. For years in which the Tribal Lead Agency submits a biennial CCDF Plan, the Plan itself serves as the application. However, in non-Plan years, the Tribal Child Count Declaration serves as the application for funding. For existing grantees, FY 2015 is a non-Plan year and therefore those Tribes only need to submit the Child Count Declaration. A new grantee must submit a complete CCDF Plan, including the Child Count Declaration.

Tribal Eligibility for CCDF Funds: Pursuant to 45 CFR 98.80, a Tribe is eligible to receive CCDF funds if the Tribe is federally recognized and the tribal population includes at least 50 children under age 13.

A Tribe with fewer than 50 children under age 13 may participate in a consortium of eligible Tribes. In order to be eligible to receive CCDF funds on behalf of its member Tribes, a tribal consortium must:

- Consist of Tribes that meet the eligibility requirements for the CCDF program or that would meet the eligibility requirements if the Tribe or tribal organization had at least 50 children under age 13;

- Demonstrate it has authorization from each participating Tribe to receive CCDF funds on behalf of the Tribe; and
- Demonstrate that it has the managerial, technical, and administrative staff with the ability to administer funds, manage a CCDF program, and comply with the provisions of the CCDF Act and regulations.

Membership Changes – It is the responsibility of a tribal consortium to notify the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of any changes in its membership for CCDF funding purposes during the approved plan period. For example, if a new Tribe joins a tribal consortium to receive FY 2015 CCDF funds, or if a current tribal consortium member elects not to receive FY 2015 CCDF funds through that tribal consortium, these changes must be conveyed to ACF in writing by the tribal consortium.

Tribal Child Counts:

ACF will calculate grant awards based on a self-certified Child Count Declaration for the number of children under age 13 (e.g. up through age 12) who reside on or near the reservation or service area. Keep in mind the following information as you prepare annual tribal child counts for CCDF funds:

- Tribal Lead Agencies have flexibility in defining “Indian Child,” and may include children from other Tribes, providing that such Tribes are federally recognized, consistent with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act’s definition of Indian Tribe.
- “Service area” must be “on or near the reservation,” and therefore must be within a reasonably close geographic proximity to the delineated borders of a Tribe’s reservation (with the exception of Tribes in Alaska, California, and Oklahoma). Tribes that do not have reservations must establish service areas within reasonably close geographic proximity to the area where the Tribe’s population resides. ACF will not approve an entire state as a Tribe’s service area.

PLEASE BE ADVISED: The Tribal Lead Agency may not count any children who are included in the child count of another CCDF Tribal Lead Agency. To ensure unduplicated child counts, a Tribal Lead Agency is required to confer with all other CCDF Tribal Lead Agencies that have overlapping or neighboring service areas.

Tribal Lead Agencies are advised that ACF will not accept Child Count Declarations based on child counts that were conducted prior to July 1 of the previous year. For FY 2015 funding, the child count of children under age 13 must be completed no later than June 30, 2014, and no earlier than July 1, 2013.

Special Instructions for Tribal Consortium

- Individual Child Counts Required - A tribal consortium must submit an individual Child Count Declaration for each participating Tribe. An individual authorized to act for the Tribe must sign each individual Child Count Declaration. A tribal consortium must provide a summary section listing the name of each participating Tribe and its individual child count. The Tribal Consortium must include the total child count for the entire consortium.
- "Special Rule for Indian Tribes in Alaska" - Only the Metlakatla Indian Community of the Annette Islands Reserve and the 12 Alaska Native Regional Nonprofit Corporations are eligible to receive Tribal Mandatory Funds.

Alaska Native Regional Nonprofit Corporations will have to provide a separate child count certification for Discretionary Funding purposes. This count will consist of its self-certified Tribal Mandatory Funding count, minus the child count number for any Alaska tribal grantee in its Region that applies directly for Discretionary Funding. In instances where a Regional Corporation has separate child counts for Discretionary and Tribal Mandatory Funds, both counts may be reported on the Child Count Declaration.

Contact your ACF Regional Office if you have questions or need assistance

Exempt vs. Non-Exempt Grantee Status:

Exempt Tribes: Tribal Lead Agencies with CCDF allocations less than \$500,000 are not required to:

1. operate a certificate program that offers parental choice from a full range of providers (i.e., center-based, group home, family child care, and in-home) unless the Tribe chooses to include such services and associated requirements (see 45 CFR 98.83(f)), and
2. are not required to spend at least 4 percent on quality activities. However, we encourage all Tribes to invest in activities to improve health and safety, provider training and other activities that support the overall quality of child care services in Tribal communities.

Non-Exempt Tribes: Tribal Lead Agencies with CCDF allocations equal to or greater than \$500,000 for a fiscal year are non-exempt. Non-exempt Tribal Lead Agencies must:

1. use at least 4 percent of the aggregate CCDF funds expended for a fiscal year for quality activities, and
2. operate a certificate program that offers parental choice from a full range of providers (i.e., center-based, group home, family,

and in-home care).

A Tribal Lead Agency that moves from the exempt to non-exempt category has a phase-in period of 1 year to meet the CCDF non-exempt requirements. The 1-year period begins with the issuance date of the grant award letter indicating that a Tribe's final allocation is equal to or greater than \$500,000.

A non-exempt Tribal Lead Agency must describe how it is meeting non-exempt requirements in its FY 2014-2015 CCDF plan, including Plan sections 3.2. (descriptions of direct child care services), 3.3. (payment system), 5.2.-5.3. (activities and goals to improve the quality of child care).

Funding Estimates and Allocation Formulas:

The CCDF is comprised of two funding sources:

- Discretionary Funds – funding that is provided under the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act, as amended. The Discretionary Funds will include a base amount of \$20,000 plus a per child amount for each Tribe or tribal consortium with a maximum of 50 children.
- Tribal Mandatory Funds – funding that is provided to eligible Tribes and tribal organizations under Section 418 of the Social Security Act. Tribal Mandatory Funds are calculated solely on a per child basis and do not include a base amount.

The per child amount for both Discretionary and Tribal Mandatory Funds depends upon the total number of children in all participating Tribes, thus ACF cannot calculate in advance the exact per child amount until all child counts have been submitted and the FY 2015 budget becomes available. For planning purposes, current CCDF Tribal grantees should use their funding amounts from the FY 2014 as an estimate. A **new** applicant should use the base amount plus approximately \$50 per child to estimate its allotment for Discretionary funding, and should use approximately \$85 per child to estimate its allotment for Tribal Mandatory funding.

A tribal consortium should estimate its allotment for Discretionary funding for each of its members by calculating a portion of the base amount that is equivalent to the ratio of the number of children in each member Tribe to 50, plus the additional per child amount. For example, a Tribe with 49 children is allotted 49/50ths of \$20,000, or \$19,600. The per child amount is then multiplied by 49 and added to the \$19,600 base amount.

Important Note: The per child amounts listed above are provided for the purpose of estimating the allotments that will become available beginning October 1, 2014, and may increase or decrease when

funding appropriations and updated data become available before the final grant awards are issued.

Discretionary Targeted Funds:

The FY 2015 allocations may include targeted funds for school-age care and resource and referral activities. This amount must be spent on school age care and/or resource and referral activities. The amount of targeted funds is based on \$500 per Tribe plus a per child amount. Further information about the targeted funds will be included on final allocation tables posted on the Office of Child Care website.

Note to Non-Exempt Tribal Lead Agencies: The targeted funds are to be used in addition to the “not less than 4 percent” required to be spent on activities that improve the quality and availability of child care.

Administrative Cost:

No more than 15 percent of the aggregate CCDF funds expended from each year’s allotment may be used for administrative costs. Tribal Lead Agencies should review the CCDF regulations at 45 CFR 98.52 for a discussion of administrative costs.

Note: the Discretionary Funds base amount is not subject to the 15 percent limitation, nor included in the calculation for the 15 percent limitation.

Construction and Renovation:

In order to use CCDF funds for construction or major renovation projects, all Tribal Lead Agencies are required to follow ACF’s construction and renovation application procedures as requested via a separate Program Instruction. The Program Instruction can be found at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/pi2013-01>.

If a Tribal Lead Agency constructs or renovates more than one facility, it must seek ACF approval for each project (even if the projects use identical plans and specifications). Early in the planning process, Tribal Lead Agencies are advised to contact their appropriate ACF Regional Office (see Attachment B).

Local Market Rate Survey

ACF has clarified certain provisions of the CCDF regulation regarding local market rate surveys to address:

1. how the payments rates are adequate to ensure equal access based on the results of the Market Rate Survey (MRS);
2. the conditions under which a Tribal Lead Agency conducts its own Market Rate Survey (MRS);
3. conditions under which a Tribal Lead Agency may base its payment rates on the State market rate survey rather than conducting its own survey;
4. State/Tribal coordination around market rate surveys; and

local market rate survey completion deadlines.

For additional information, see Program Instruction CCDF-ACF- PI-2009-02, which is available on the Office of Child Care's website at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/pi-2009-02>.

**Family
Co-Payments:**

Under Section 3.8 of the Tribal Plan, each Tribal Lead Agency must describe and attach a sliding fee scale that provides for cost sharing (co-payment) by families and is based on income and family size. A Tribal Lead Agency may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size.

Note: A Tribal Lead Agency cannot use Federal CCDF dollars to pay the co-payment on behalf of an Indian family who is receiving a CCDF subsidy from a State.

**Health and Safety
Requirements:**

Section 98.41 states each Tribal Lead Agency is certifying there are in effect, under tribal, local, or State law, requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children. These requirements are applicable to child care providers that provide services for which assistance is made available under the CCDF. Such requirements shall include:

- Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases (including immunizations);
- Building and Physical Premises Safety and
- Health and Safety Training

To ensure that children are being cared for in healthy and safe child care facilities, Tribal Lead Agencies are encouraged to partner with local health agencies, including the Indian Health Service (IHS) that conduct environmental health surveys, and reflect these partnerships in sections 2 and 6 of the Tribal Plan, as appropriate.

Note: In 2000, after consultation with Tribes, tribal organizations, and tribal child care programs, the Office of Child Care issued *Minimum Tribal Child Care Standards* as voluntary guidelines that represent a baseline from which Tribes should operate to ensure that children are cared for in healthy and safe environments and that their basic needs are being met. These voluntary guidelines identify minimum standards for health and safety in child care and are not intended to supersede any existing Federal, State, tribal, or local laws or regulations. An updated (May 2008) copy of this resource document *is available on the Office of Child Care's Child Care Technical Assistance Network (CCTAN) website at:*

<https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/resource/minimum-standards-tribal-child-care-health-and-safety-guide>

Obligation and

Tribal Lead Agencies must obligate FY 2015 Tribal Mandatory and

Liquidation Periods: Discretionary Funds by September 30, 2016, and liquidate all funds by September 30, 2017.

Note: Any FY 2015 CCDF funds approved by ACF for construction and major renovation must be obligated and liquidated by September 30, 2017. The liquidation time frame begins with the date that funds are originally awarded, not the date that funds are transferred to the separate grant award for construction and major renovation. There is no separate obligation period for construction and major renovation funds.

Deadlines and Effective Dates: FY 2015 CCDF Funding Applications (Child Count Declaration) and for new tribe's the CCDF Plan Preprint must be submitted to ACF no later than July 1, 2014.

Application and Plan Preprint: The required Child Count Declaration and Tribal Plan Preprint templates are available in electronic format from ACF Regional Offices (see Attachment A) and on the Office of Child Care's website at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ>.

Submitting the Tribal Plan: Tribes are required to submit the FY 2015 Application/Tribal Plan Preprint as follows:

One (1) copy to:

ACF Regional Office
Attn: Child Care Regional Manager (See Attachment B)

Note: OCC no longer requires Tribes to submit copies of the Plan Preprint to the Tribal Contractor. All other correspondence with the Office of Child Care should be addressed to: 370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W., 5th Floor East, Washington, D.C. 20447.

Plan Amendments: Any substantive change to the CCDF program requires an amendment to the approved Tribal Plan (45 CFR 98.18(b)). Tribal Lead Agencies should enter amendment information on the Amendment Log located in Appendix 3 of the Plan Preprint and submit the Log and amendment to your ACF Regional Office **within 60 days of the effective date of the change**.

ACF will make determinations on amendments no later than 90 days following the date on which the amendment is received, unless a written agreement to extend that period has been secured (45 CFR 98.18(b)). ACF Program Instruction CCDF-ACF-PI-2009-01 provides additional clarification regarding CCDF Plan amendments. This Program Instruction is available on the Office of Child Care's website at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/pi-2009-01>

Public Law 102-477 Options: The “Indian Employment, Training, and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992” (Pub. L. 102-477) permits tribal governments to consolidate several federally funded employment, training, and related services programs into a single, coordinated, comprehensive plan. CCDF is one of the programs that may be consolidated under Pub. L. 102-477. This Program Instruction (i.e., for the Tribal Plan) does not apply to those Tribes and tribal organizations that consolidate CCDF funds under Pub. L. 102-477. A separate Program Instruction containing the 102-477 application and plan requirements is available on the Office of Child Care’s website at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-acf-pi-2013-04>.

Reporting Requirements: By the end of December each year, Tribal Lead Agencies are required to report CCDF aggregate program data on the ACF-700 report form, and CCDF financial expenditures on the ACF-696T report. Separate Program Instructions are issued each year providing information on the ACF-700 and ACF-696T reporting requirements. These Program Instructions are available on the Office of Child Care’s website at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/program-instructions>

Reallotted Discretionary Funds: Tribal Lead Agencies are required to notify ACF by April 1, 2015, if they will be unable to obligate any portion of their FY 2015 CCDF Discretionary Funds allotment by September 30, 2015. In accordance with 45 CFR 98.64(d), any portion of a Tribe’s allotment of Discretionary Funds that is not required to carry out its plan in the period for which the allotment is made available shall be reallotted to other tribal grantees in proportion to their original allotments.

- If the total amount available for reallotment from all tribal CCDF grantees is \$25,000 or more, funds will be reallotted to other tribal grantees.
- If the total available is less than \$25,000, no reallotment will take place, and funds will revert to the Federal Government.
- If an individual reallotment amount to a Tribe is less than \$500, a reallotment award will not be issued to that Tribe.
- If a tribal CCDF grantee does not submit a reallotment report by the April deadline, a determination will be made that no funds are available for reallotment. Any funds reported to be available for reallotment after the April deadline shall revert to the Federal Government.

Audits: Tribal Lead Agencies must follow the audit requirements in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F and the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996.

Inquiries: Direct all inquiries to the ACF Regional Offices (Attachment B)

Shannon L Rudisill
Director
Office of Child Care

Attachments:

A – Child Count Declaration

B – ACF Regional Child Care Program Managers List