

# **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Implementation Research and Evaluation Planning Grants FY2017 - Phase I/Cohort 2**

## **Improved Childcare Outcomes Research Planning**

**Organization:** Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.

### **Key Project Staff:**

Holly Morales, Director, Employment and Training Services Department  
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Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC), a tribal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Lead Agency designated in accordance with 45 CFR 98.10 and 98.16(a), proposes the research planning project, Improving Childcare Outcomes Research Planning (ICORP). The project will provide support for research planning relevant to new policy implementation in response to the CCDBG Act of 2014 in collaboration with the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) over eighteen months in Anchorage, Alaska.

The CCDBG Act of 2014 has created a pressing need to gather, analyze, and share information in order to effectively implement policies in four critical areas: the health and safety of children in child care; informed consumer choices and access to information to support child development; equal access to stable, high quality child care for low-income children; and the quality of child care and the early childhood workforce. CITC's proposed project, Improving Childcare Outcomes Research Planning (ICORP), addresses this need with particular emphasis on identifying implementation strategies that will have positive impacts on Alaska Native and American Indian families, children, and the child-care providers who serve them. Policy questions of the greatest concern to us pertain to ensuring equal access to stable, high quality child care for low-income children and enhancing the quality of both child care and of the workforce that delivers this care.

CITC's Employment and Training Services Department (ETSD) operates both the CCDF and Tribal TANF programs in Anchorage, Alaska. These services play a critical role in the lives of Alaska Native and American Indian families and children living in Anchorage, who experience more than twice the rate of poverty as their non-Native peers, while struggling with educational success beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment. While CITC is well established as a successful results accountable social service provider, with the capacity to collect data relevant to policy-related research, and a history of collaborating with independent policy researchers, we lack the expertise to independently develop and implement research proposals. This project will bring together Lead Agency staff, a repeat research partner, ISER's Dr. Diwakar Vadapalli, and local stakeholders impacted

by childcare policy decision making to plan for near future assessment of the efficacy of specific approaches to implementing policies called for by the CCDBG Act of 2014.

**A Dual Generation Approach: Examining the Impact of the CCDBG 12- Month Eligibility Period on Child Care Continuity and Parental Employment for Families Receiving Wisconsin Shares**

**Organization:** Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

**Key Project Staff:**

Naomi Rahn, Research and Planning Section Chief, Division of Early Care and Education

Amanda Reeve, Policy Initiatives Advisor, Division of Early Care and Education

As the Lead Agency for administration of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) provides child care assistance to approximately 45,000 families each month through the Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program. The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 (CCDBG) has resulted in substantial policy changes, including implementation of the required 12-month eligibility period for families receiving Wisconsin Shares. The purpose of this proposed Phase I project is to develop a research and evaluation plan to determine how the 12-month eligibility period impacts access to and continuity of child care, parent selection of high-quality child care, and parental employment trends and outcomes for families receiving Wisconsin Shares. One of DCF's priorities is to utilize a whole family, or dual generation, approach to serving families. This project will take a dual generation approach by developing a research plan to better understand how implementation of the 12-month eligibility period has impacted both children and their parents receiving Wisconsin Shares.

The objectives of this Phase I project are to: 1) conduct a thorough review of the literature to inform our project plan; 2) develop a rigorous research and evaluation plan to examine the impact of the 12-month eligibility change on child care access and continuity; on parent selection of high-quality child care based on YoungStar, Wisconsin's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS); and on parent employment; 3) develop the design for a data warehouse that will combine administrative data from existing data systems to answer the research and evaluation plan questions; 4) develop an action plan to increase collaboration among researchers and policymakers at DCF to increase the utility of research results for informing policy. When the objectives of Phase I are complete, DCF will be well positioned to apply for Phase II funding. If funded, the goal of the Phase II project will be to carry out the research and evaluation project from Phase I and use the results to improve outcomes for families receiving Wisconsin Shares. Specifically, study results will be used to increase access and continuity of care for children, encourage parent selection of high-quality child care, and improve employment outcomes for parents through collaborative efforts among DCF researchers, DCF policymakers, and other Wisconsin stakeholders.

## **Refine and Expand the Office of Child Development and Early Learning's Early Childhood Research Agenda**

**Organization:** Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL)

**Key Project Staff:**

Sue Polojac, Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant Director, OCDEL  
Michelle Kee, Educational Research Associate, OCDEL

The Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning provides support, resources, and programmatic oversight for early care and education programs in Pennsylvania through the Departments of Education and Human Services. In this governance structure, OCDEL is accountable to both agency secretaries in the implementation and oversight of services for Pennsylvania children, their families delivered through a combination of evidence-based home visiting, infants, through school age child care, state-funded preschool, and Early Intervention Services Parts B and C.

OCDEL will use the CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Phase I/Cohort 2 Planning Grant to identify a research consultant, refine and expand the current research agenda to address the following (1) evaluate the impact of systems consolidation and change for supporting families and child care providers, including those that receive CCDBG funds;(2) evaluate the impact of child care policy change, based on the CCDBG Act of 2014, that better supports the child's experience in early care and education and the corresponding fiscal impact; (3) evaluate the impact of revising Pennsylvania's quality rating and improvement system, Keystone STARS, has on provider participation and movement within the quality continuum; (4) validate the revised Keystone STARS Levels as indicators of quality; and (5) establish data regarding the impact of Pennsylvania's funding approach for child care subsidy and quality add-ons on the capacity of child care providers across care levels from infant through school age.

As part of the CCDBG Implementation Research and Evaluation Grant, the results of this planning grant will establish a broader research framework. This will allow the office to prioritize resources for future internal and independent research opportunities, and will embed the results of the planning grant process into its annual strategic plan and as appropriate revise our CCDBG State Plan to address activities or recommendations identified in the process.

OCDEL has a research agenda that heavily focuses on recommendations involving short and long-term child outcomes. OCDEL would like to include an evaluation of Pennsylvania's success in meeting our plan's identified goals and targets of provider growth and capacity building while working at the same time to enhance and align the quality of services, link comprehensive services to children in child care settings, and develop an increased supply of quality care for vulnerable populations.