

Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Information Technology Environment Scan

Formative Data Collections for Program Support

0970 - 0531

Supporting Statement

Part B

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Submitted By:
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Office of Child Care
Administration for Children and Families
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Overview of Study Objectives

The Office of Child Care (OCC), under the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), seeks approval for collecting information about data and information technology (IT) systems, including associated policies, practices, and funding, used by State and Territory Lead Agencies that receive Federal funding for the administration of the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Program.

The information collected will be used to inform OCC of the types of training and technical assistance (T/TA) needed by Lead Agencies to improve data and IT systems, including associated Lead Agency guidance and processes. The results of the information collected will be used to baseline the current condition of data and IT systems and measure the effectiveness of the T/TA provided by the Data and Information Service Consultation Center (DISCC), an OCC contractor, to improve those data and IT systems over time.

Additionally, “The 2024 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Final Rule updates regulations (45 CFR Part 98) to help working families afford child care and broadly support child care quality and accessibility in communities. Policies included in this final rule are designed to:

- Lower child care costs for families;
- Improve payments to child care providers;
- Increase child care options for families;
- Make enrollment easier and faster for families; and
- Increase clarity in CCDF requirements.”¹

To comply with the 2024 CCDF Final Rule, Lead Agencies may need to make changes to existing data and IT systems or put in place new data and IT systems. This information collection will provide insights into the challenges Lead Agencies may face so that OCC/DISCC can provide supportive T/TA, such as toolkits for developing an IT strategic plan, an IT strategic roadmap, and one or more IT project plans, as well as collaborating with Lead Agencies to develop and implement these plans to comply with the 2024 CCDF Final Rule.

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

Target Population

DISCC is seeking information about data and IT systems used to support the CCDF Program from Lead Agencies in fifty (50) States, the District of Columbia (considered a state for this purpose), and five (5) Territories.

Sampling and Site Selection

Sampling and site selection will not be used for this study. The study requests participation from all State and Territory Lead Agencies. By gathering information from all Lead Agencies, DISCC improves the potential for identifying opportunities to share information and leverage existing solutions, where feasible, across Lead Agencies.

¹ [2024 Child Care and Development Fund \(CCDF\) Final Rule Fact Sheet | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/2024-child-care-and-development-fund-ccdf-final-rule-fact-sheet)

Sharing lessons learned helps Lead Agencies avoid risk or reduce risk by identifying risks, planning mitigation options, and recognizing when risks become issues, so they can implement mitigation plans before significant damage or setbacks are realized. Leveraging solutions that have been proven effective reduces the time and costs associated with design, development, and deployment of new solutions, and reduces the risks associated with change management. This information collection offers unique opportunities for Lead Agencies to identify potential solutions for meeting new or expanded requirements in the 2024 CCDF Final Rule and avoiding unnecessary costs and risks of new data and IT systems.

Appropriateness of Study Design and Methods for Planned Uses

This study is designed to gather information from State and Territory Lead Agencies on the data and IT systems used to support the CCDF Program. Lead Agency opinions about the extent to which they agree with statements in the scan and are satisfied with the level of agreement with the statements is subjective. DISCC's goal is to help Lead Agencies improve data and IT systems, user experience, and equitable access to child care. Improvements will be evaluated using the same or a similar scan in follow-on years. Lead Agency responses will be compared year-to-year to evaluate the extent of their improvements and increased satisfaction with the state of their data and IT systems.

DISCC will guard against misuse of responses by reporting aggregate information rather than individual responses. Lead Agencies will receive a report depicting their own responses and how their responses compare to the aggregate ratings for all Lead Agencies or a subset of Lead Agencies, such as states, territories, regions, agencies with the same or similar organizational alignment or structure, agencies within a region, etc., to support CCDF programmatic needs. This report will not allow any Lead Agency to discern the responses provided by another Lead Agency or allow them to rank Lead Agencies.

This information is not intended to be used as the principal basis for public policy decisions and is not expected to meet the threshold of influential or highly influential scientific information.

2. Procedures for Collection of Information

Data Collection Processes

Results will be collected using Qualtrics, a commercial survey and analytics tool hosted by ACF, to conduct the CCDF IT Environment Scan. Qualtrics will enable State and Territory Lead Agencies to access and complete the survey online. Responses are not required, and respondents may provide all or portions of the information requested. DISCC will provide instructional materials for completing the scan online using the CCTAN/DISCC website, a live and recorded webinar using Teams or Zoom to orient Lead Agencies to the scan, and virtual office hours using Teams or Zoom for respondents to obtain answers to questions about the scan.

Data Handling

Results will be collected in Qualtrics and will not be modified without consultation with and agreement from the Lead Agency Administrator and/or respondent. Likert scales have been standardized to reduce data entry errors and support data processing and data analytics. Data may be exported to a tool(s) with more robust analytic or visualization capabilities, such as PowerBI or Tableau, to better inform the ACF T/TA activities and program.

Results will be analyzed and used in various documents to inform the ACF CCDF Program (e.g., inform T/TA needs for data and gauge IT system improvements). Individual responses will not be released publicly or shared with other Lead Agencies.

Data Analysis

Results will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Initially, DISCC will use quantitative analysis to present respondent information (e.g., number / percent of respondents who have or do not have data and IT systems and number / percent of respondents who are satisfied or not satisfied with their current condition). This information will inform ACF about areas where respondents have the highest interest and needs for T/TA.

Quantitative analysis will set the stage for follow-on analysis, including qualitative analysis of results for a deeper understanding that will inform T/TA efforts that will drive data and IT system improvements (e.g., identifying a large population of Lead Agencies experiencing a similar issue with similar technologies where resolution would have a significant impact). This analysis will also look at responses across multiple questions for trends where technologies, vendors, issues, and successes can inform needs, sharing opportunities, and outcomes for improvements in processes, data, and systems.

Data Use

Results will be analyzed and used in various documents to inform the ACF CCDF Program (e.g., inform T/TA needs for data and IT system improvements and measure data and IT system improvement over time). Individual responses will not be released publicly.

Lead Agencies will receive a report depicting their own responses and how their responses compare to the aggregate ratings for all Lead Agencies or a subset of Lead Agencies, such as states, territories, regions, agencies with the same or similar organizational alignment or structure, agencies within a region, etc. This report will enable the Lead Agency to understand their relative outcomes compared with other Lead Agencies to inform their CCDF program planning and activities. This report will not allow any Lead Agency to discern the responses provided by another Lead Agency or allow them to rank Lead Agencies.

As deemed appropriate and in consultation with ACF, publicly available external datasets, such as information from other Federal agencies, may be used to augment scan responses with population, financial, and other datasets.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Nonresponse

Response Rates

The scan is not designed to produce statistically generalizable findings and participation is wholly at the respondent's discretion. Response rates will be calculated only to inform the intensity of the need for T/TA in specific areas.

DISCC will work with OCC Central and Regional Office staff to encourage State and Territory Lead Agencies to respond to the scan. OCC and/or ACF leadership will announce the scan via electronic communications when the scan is released, emphasizing its importance to the CCDF Program. DISCC will provide a webinar to introduce the scan and provide instructions on completing the scan. The webinar will be recorded and can be accessed by Lead Agencies at any time. DISCC will provide a "one-pager" information sheet to explain and promote the scan and will hold office hours for Lead Agencies to ask questions and obtain guidance on completing the scan.

DISCC anticipates that Administrators for Lead Agencies will want to engage with staff members to reflect the most accurate information possible when responding to various portions of the scan. DISCC estimates Administrators will engage an average of three (3) additional staff members to complete the scan. These staff members may be the IT Director/Manager, IT professionals, and staff who administer specific business functions within the CCDF Program. Administrators with larger programs may engage more than 3 staff members while Administrators with smaller programs may engage fewer than 3 staff members.

NonResponse

Nonresponses will not be used as part of DISCC analysis and are not expected to significantly impact overall results.

As participants will not be randomly sampled and findings are not intended to be representative, non-response bias will not be calculated. Respondent demographic information, such as level (state, territory), will be documented and reported in written materials associated with the data collection. Non-response rates will be evaluated to inform future scans to improve data collection.

4. Test of Procedures or Methods to be Taken

Development of Data Collection Instruments

Scan questions were designed in collaboration with the contractor, using the Performance Work Statement (PWS) and IT topics identified in the proposal to the PWS. The topics are typical and associated with IT best practices. Additionally, these topics were used in discussions with OCC staff and other TA centers to ensure they addressed the comprehensive nature of programmatic needs, such as topics covering the 2024 CCDF Final Rule. Sources of existing data were sought from all OCC interactions and many

questions were eliminated where the information could be obtained from State plans or existing databases.

As part of developing the scan, questions were frequently shared with OCC staff and other OCC TA centers that provided feedback on use of plain language, commonly used terms, and context to the CCDF Program. Pre-tests were not feasible due to the limited time during which the scan was developed and reviewed, and ACF's target date for release of the scan to permit responses prior to the end of the base fiscal year (FY).

Note that through the efforts described in the previous two paragraphs, the same information was not requested of more than 9 individuals who were not federal employees and therefore the activities were not subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act.

The scan uses different styles of questions/statements to collect single-responses, multiple-responses, and text/qualitative responses. Responses may be analyzed singularly, in comparison to other responses, and in combination with other responses.

DISCC simplified the original IT Environment Scan language and Likert scales to reduce the burden on Lead Agencies. While customized multiple choice responses would provide DISCC with more informative responses from Lead Agencies, that approach requires much more reading and consideration by Lead Agencies which increases the burden on them to respond. Based on these changes, DISCC reduced the initial estimate of burden from 2 to 4 hours to under 1 hour for each respondent.

5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

The CCDF IT Environment Scan was developed by Donna Seymour working for KL Scott and Associates (KLSA), donna.seymour@acf.hhs.gov, 202-763-4000. KLSA will collect, process, and analyze the information for the agency and prepare reports regarding the results.

Attachments

Attachment A – CCDF IT Environment Scan 20240624