

1 CCDF Program Administration

Strong organizational structures, operational capacity, and partnerships position States and Territories to administer CCDF efficiently, effectively, and collaboratively.

This section identifies the CCDF Lead Agency, CCDF Lead Agency leadership, and the entities and individuals who will participate in the implementation of the program. It also identifies the partners who were consulted to develop the Plan.

1.1 CCDF Leadership

The governor of a State or Territory must designate an agency (which may be an appropriate collaborative agency) or establish a joint interagency office to represent the State or Territory as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications.

1.1.1 Designated Lead Agency

Identify the Lead Agency or joint interagency office designated by the State or Territory. OCC will send official grant correspondence, such as grant awards, grant adjustments, Plan approvals, and disallowance notifications, to the designated contact identified here.

- a. Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Office Information:
 - i. Name of Lead Agency: *North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services*
 - ii. Street Address: *600 East Boulevard Avenue, Dept. 325*
 - iii. City: *Bismarck*
 - iv. State: *North Dakota*
 - v. ZIP Code: *58502-0250*
 - vi. Web Address for Lead Agency: *www.hhs.nd.gov*
- b. Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Official contact information:
 - i. Lead Agency Official First Name: *Wayne*
 - ii. Lead Agency Official Last Name: *Salter*
 - iii. Title: *Health and Human Services Commissioner*
 - iv. Phone Number: *701-328-2038*
 - v. Email Address: *wsalter@nd.gov*

1.1.2 CCDF Administrator

Identify the CCDF Administrator designated by the Lead Agency, the day-to-day contact, or the person with responsibility for administering the State's or Territory's CCDF program. The OCC will send programmatic communications, such as program announcements, program instructions, and data collection instructions, to the designated contact identified here. If there

is more than one designated contact with equal or shared responsibility for administering the CCDF program, identify the Co-Administrator or the person with administrative responsibilities and include their contact information.

- a. CCDF Administrator contact information:
 - i. CCDF Administrator First Name: *Mariah*
 - ii. CCDF Administrator Last Name: *Hill*
 - iii. Title of the CCDF Administrator: *CCDF Coordinator*
 - iv. Phone Number: *701-328-3809*
 - v. Email Address: *mfhill@nd.gov*
- b. CCDF Co-Administrator contact information (if applicable):
 - i. CCDF Co-Administrator First Name: *Emily*
 - ii. CCDF Co-Administrator Last Name: *Kerns*
 - iii. Title of the CCDF Co-Administrator: *Child Care Assistance Program Administrator*
 - iv. Phone Number: *701-328-2337*
 - v. Email Address: *ekerns@nd.gov*
 - vi. Description of the Role of the Co-Administrator: *Responsible for the subsidy portion of CCDF*

1.2 CCDF Policy Decision Authority

The Lead Agency has broad authority to administer (i.e., establish rules) and operate (i.e., implement activities) the CCDF program through other governmental, non-governmental, or public or private local agencies as long as the Lead Agency retains overall responsibility for the administration of the program. Administrative and implementation responsibilities undertaken by agencies other than the Lead Agency must be governed by written agreements that specify the mutual roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency and other agencies in meeting the program requirements.

1.2.1 Entity establishing CCDF program rules

Which of the following CCDF program rules and policies are administered (i.e., set or established) at the State or Territory level or local level? Identify whether CCDF program rules and policies are established by the State or Territory (even if operated locally) or whether the CCDF policies or rules are established by local entities, such as counties or workforce boards.

Check one of the following:

- All program rules and policies are set or established by the State or Territory. (If checked, skip to question 1.2.2.)
- Some or all program rules and policies are set or established by local entities or agencies. If checked, indicate which entities establish the following policies. Check all that apply:

- i. Eligibility rules and policies (e.g., income limits) are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ii. Sliding-fee scale is set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- iii. Payment rates and payment policies are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- iv. Licensing standards and processes are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- v. Standards and monitoring processes for license-exempt providers are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- vi. Quality improvement activities, including QIS, are set by the:
 - State or Territory.
 - Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions).
 - Other. Identify the entity and describe the policies the entity can set: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- vii. Other. List and describe any other program rules and policies that are set at a level other than the State or Territory level: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

1.2.2 Entities implementing CCDF services

The Lead Agency has broad authority to operate (i.e., implement activities) through other agencies, as long as it retains overall responsibility for CCDF. Complete the table below to identify which entity(ies) implements or performs CCDF services.

Check the box(es) to indicate which entity(ies) implement or perform CCDF services.

CCDF Activity	CCDF Lead Agency	TANF Agency	Local Government Agencies	CCR&R
Who conducts eligibility determinations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Who issues payments?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who monitors licensed providers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who monitors license-exempt providers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who operates the quality improvement activities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other. List and describe any other State or Territory agencies or partners that implement or perform CCDF services and identify their responsibilities. *N/A*

1.2.3 Written agreements and oversight

For any activities performed by agencies other than the Lead Agency as reported above in 1.2.1 and 1.2.2, identify the processes the Lead Agency uses to oversee and monitor CCDF administration and implementation activities to retain overall responsibility for the CCDF program.

Check and describe how the Lead Agency includes in its written agreements the required elements. Note: The contents of the written agreement may vary based on the role the agency is asked to assume or type of project but must include, at a minimum, the elements below.

a. Tasks to be performed.

Yes. If yes, describe: *The Lead Agency's contracted child care resource and referral vendor's scope of work addresses parent and family services including child care referral service, consumer education resources, referral feedback survey responsibility and referral follow-up expectations.*

The Lead Agency maintains rigorous oversight of CCDF administration by formalizing written agreements with entities such as Human Service Zones that handle eligibility determinations. These agreements specify the tasks to be performed, including training and supervision of eligibility workers, adherence to updated policies, and execution of eligibility determinations.

No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

b. Schedule for completing tasks.

Yes. If yes, describe: *The Lead Agency's contracted child care resource and referral vendor assists parents in locating child care and providing consumer education on an as needed basis, providing a statewide, toll-free telephone number that is staffed Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., along with a general email address that parents can reach out to after hours. The vendor must assure that requests for child care referral services are responded to within 48 hours. Additionally, the Lead Agency maintains a child care referral database and consumer education website to serve parents and families 24/7.*

No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

c. Budget which itemizes categorical expenditures in accordance with CCDF requirements.

Yes. If yes, describe: *The Lead Agency's contracted child care resource and referral vendor receives CCDF funding to conduct child care referrals as part of their contract. The contracted vendor certifies that they have read and understand the 2 CFR Part 200 Informational Guide. The vendor submits a budget to the Lead Agency categorizing expenditures for services which is approved by the Lead Agency.*

No. If no, describe: *CCDF funding is not used to pay for the Human Service Zone's determination of eligibility.*

d. Indicators or measures to assess performance of those agencies.

Yes. If yes, describe: *The Lead Agency's contracted child care resource and referral vendor completes a quarterly report and meets with the Lead Agency to discuss performance including number of referrals by type, number of referral feedback surveys completed, trends in care requests, etc.*

The Lead Agency maintains rigorous oversight of CCDF administration by formalizing written agreements with the Human Service Zones to stipulate performance benchmarks, such as timeliness and error rates in eligibility processing. Human Service Zones are also provided with monthly quality control reports, which help in identifying areas needing improvement and in tailoring training programs to enhance overall service delivery and compliance.

No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

- e. In addition to the written agreements identified above, describe any other monitoring and auditing processes used to oversee CCDF administration. *The Lead Agency is required to complete a six-month contract monitoring checklist for the child care resource and referral contract that covers communication between parties, technical assistance, reimbursement requests, programmatic progress reports, client complaints regarding the contract, concerns with the entity's ability to perform the scope of services outlined in the contract, and changes in key personnel. The Lead Agency also meets quarterly with the vendor to review programmatic progress. The Human Service Zones receive monthly reports to ensure the quality of their child care assistance cases. A quality control team reviews each case for accuracy and manages the correction of any errors found. Quarterly, the Human Service Zone directors and the Lead Agency leadership team meet to discuss caseloads, timeliness, workload, error rates, and new policies. This meeting provides an opportunity for an open discussion on any concerns with the Child Care Assistance program, and the eligibility determination process. Moreover, the team also has access to real-time dashboards that show work progress on child care assistance cases from application submission to the final determination of eligibility. These dashboards have the ability to drill down to the exact worker assigned to the application, providing clarity and transparency in the eligibility determination process. The Lead Agency has access to not only the workflow but also the integrated eligibility system where they can check case narration and understand how the case has been flowing from the initial application. The dashboards can also show the supervision of the individual eligibility worker as well as the other cases for that eligibility worker so if a trend from a specific Human Service Zone or worker is noticed it can be reviewed in its entirety.*

1.2.4 Information systems availability

Certification of shareable information systems.

Does the Lead Agency certify that to the extent practicable and appropriate, any code or software for child care information systems or information technology for which a Lead Agency or other agency expends CCDF funds to develop is made available to other public agencies? This includes public agencies in other States for their use in administering child care or related programs.

Yes.

No. If no, describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

1.2.5 Confidential and personally identifiable information

Certification of policies to protect confidential and personally identifiable information

Does the Lead Agency certify that it has policies in place related to the use and disclosure of confidential and personally identifiable information about children and families receiving CCDF assistance and child care providers receiving CCDF funds?

Yes.

No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

1.3 Consultation in the Development of the CCDF Plan

The Lead Agency is responsible for developing the CCDF Plan, and consultation with and meaningful input and feedback from a wide range of representatives is critical for CCDF programs to continually adapt to the changing needs of families, child care programs, and the workforce. Consultation involves meeting with or otherwise obtaining input from an appropriate agency in the development of the State or Territory CCDF Plan. As part of the Plan development process, Lead Agencies must consult with the following:

- (1) Appropriate representatives of general-purpose local government. General purpose local governments are defined by the U.S. Census at https://www2.census.gov/govs/cog/g12_org.pdf.
- (2) The State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act) or similar coordinating body pursuant to 98.14(a)(1)(vii).
- (3) Tribe(s) or Tribal organization(s) within the State. This consultation should be done in a timely manner and at the option of the Tribe(s) or Tribal organization(s).

1.3.1 Consultation efforts in CCDF Plan development

Describe the Lead Agency's consultation efforts in the development of the CCDF Plan, including how and how often the consultation occurred.

- a. Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with appropriate representatives of general-purpose local government: *The Lead Agency meets with Human Service Zone directors and supervisors monthly to discuss upcoming policy changes, ask for feedback and touch base on issues the zones may be experiencing relating to CCDF.*
- b. Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body: *The Early Childhood Council (ECC) meets at least twice annually. The Lead Agency attends every meeting to discuss CCDF-related strategies and initiatives. Insights and perspectives shared during the discussions have been incorporated into plan development. The Lead Agency will continue to engage in regular communication on CCDF plan related items during the course of plan implementation.*
- c. Describe, if applicable, how the Lead Agency consulted with Indian Tribes(s) or Tribal organizations(s) within the State: *The Lead Agency has both traveled to and held virtual meetings with Turtle Mountain, Spirit Lake, Three Affiliated Tribes, and Trenton Indian Service Area to discuss CCDF-related strategies and initiatives. Additionally, to gather input on the 2025-2027 State Plan, the Lead Agency hosted a consultation meeting with the Tribal CCDF Administrators. The Lead Agency will continue to communicate with the Tribal CCDF Administrators during the course of plan implementation.*

- d. Identify other entities, agencies, or organizations consulted on the development of the CCDF Plan (e.g., representatives from the child care workforce, or statewide afterschool networks) and describe those consultation efforts: *Representatives from the Lead Agency attended national and regional conferences to consult with other states and develop new initiatives to support quality care and workforce. Representatives from the Lead Agency had conversations with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, contracted vendors, and the statewide afterschool network while preparing the draft responses for the state plan.*

1.3.2 Public hearing process

Lead Agencies must hold at least one public hearing in the State or Territory, with sufficient Statewide or Territory-wide distribution of notice prior to such a hearing to enable the public to comment on the provision of child care services under the CCDF Plan.

Describe the Statewide or Territory-wide public hearing process held to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan.

- i. Date of the public hearing: *May 30, 2024*
Reminder: Must be no earlier than January 1, 2024. If more than one public hearing was held, enter one date (e.g., the date of the first hearing, the most recent hearing date, or any hearing date that demonstrates this requirement).
- ii. Date of notice of public hearing: *May 9, 2024*
- iii. Was the notice of public hearing posted publicly at least 20 calendar days prior to the date of the public hearing?
 Yes.
 No. If no, describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- iv. Describe how the public was notified about the public hearing, including outreach in other languages, information on interpretation services being available, etc. Include specific website links if used to provide notice. *On April 15, 2024 initial information about the public hearing date and comment period was published in the Lead Agency's provider e-newsletter. On May 9, 2024, a public notice was posted to the Lead Agency's website at: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/news/publicnotice> and to the Secretary of State's website at: <https://apps.nd.gov/sos/ndpnmn/mainmenu.htm>. Public notices include Lead Agency contact information for individuals who need accommodations to participate in meetings. Relay North Dakota services are also available. Relay North Dakota services are free and enable people who are deaf, hard of Hearing, deafblind or those with a speech disability to place and receive phone calls. Communications Assistants are specially trained to facilitate the calls.*
- v. Describe how the approach to the public hearing was inclusive of all geographic regions of the State or Territory: *The public hearing is a virtual event, allowing participants to join the meeting from their home, and enabling access to all geographic regions of the State.*

- vi. Describe how the content of the Plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing (e.g., the Plan was made available in other languages, in multiple formats, etc.): *A copy of the draft plan was posted to the Lead Agency's website. A link to the webpage was included in the public notice and in the Lead Agency's provider e-newsletter.*
- vii. Describe how the information provided by the public was taken into consideration regarding the provision of child care services under this Plan: *Public comments are taken into consideration by determining if any immediate changes could be made to the plan, or if the comments would involve a more long-term program and policy evaluation and implementation. A summary of public comments and the Lead Agency's responses will be posted to the Lead Agency's website.*

1.3.3 Public availability of final Plan, amendments, and waivers

Lead Agencies must make the submitted and approved final Plan, any approved Plan amendments, and any approved requests for temporary waivers publicly available on a website.

- a. Provide the website link to where the Plan, any Plan amendments, and waivers (if applicable) are available. Note: A Plan amendment is required if the website address where the Plan is posted changes. *The Plan, any Plan amendments, and applicable waivers are posted on the Lead Agency's webpage: <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/cfs/early-childhood-services/child-care-development-fund>.*
- b. Describe any other strategies that the Lead Agency uses to make submitted and approved CCDF Plan and approved Plan amendments available to the public. Check all that apply and describe the strategies below, including any relevant website links as examples.
 - i. Working with advisory committees. Describe: *The Lead Agency regularly meets with the Early Childhood Council (ECC) and Early Childhood Services Advisory Board to discuss CCDF related items. The ECC has multiple member seats for child care providers and the meetings are open to the public. The Early Childhood Services Advisory Board is solely comprised of child care providers from across the state and represent a cross-section of provider types. The availability of the Plan and Plan amendments have been discussed with each group.*
 - ii. Working with child care resource and referral agencies. Describe: *The Lead Agency's contracted resource and referral vendor was invited to share information on their social media platforms.*
 - iii. Providing translation in other languages. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

- iv. Sharing through social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, email).
Describe: *The CCDF State Plan has been highlighted in the Lead Agency's provider e-newsletter, along with a link to where the plan, plan amendments, and applicable waivers are posted on the Lead Agency's webpage. The public is able to sign up to receive the e-newsletter via a link on the Lead Agency's website. Information about the public hearing was shared on the Lead Agency's social media platforms. Additionally, the Lead Agency's contracted resource and referral vendor shared the Lead Agency's social media posts.*
- v. Providing notification to key constituents (e.g., parent and family groups, provider groups, advocacy groups, foundations, and businesses).
Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- vi. Working with Statewide afterschool networks or similar coordinating entities for out-of-school time. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- vii. Direct communication with the child care workforce. Describe: *The CCDF State Plan has been highlighted in the Lead Agency's provider e-newsletter, along with a link to where the plan, plan amendments, and applicable waivers are posted on the Lead Agency's webpage. Child care providers are able to sign up to receive the e-newsletter via a link on the Lead Agency's website.*
- viii. Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*