

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
DIVISION OF FAMILY AND ECONOMIC SECURITY
ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO SERIES

ACTION DFES 16-08
 NOTICE

ISSUE DATE: 12/22/2016
DISPOSAL DATE: 12/31/2017

*PROGRAM CATEGORIES:

AS FM ML TR
 CC FL NA W-2
 CS IT RA WIA
 CF JC TC
 CR LM TA

To: Child Support Agency Directors
W-2 Agency Directors
Tribal Child Support Agency Directors
Tribal Economic Support Directors
DCF Regional Coordinators

From: Kris Randal
Division Administrator

RE: 2017 Children First Program Plan Request

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this memo is to outline plans for the Children First program for 2017.

BACKGROUND:

The Children First program provides case management services to connect noncustodial parents to employment services for work with a goal of obtaining employment and providing child support to their families. The program provides an opportunity for noncustodial parents to succeed in paying court ordered child support.

Funding for the 2017 program will be \$1.14 million.

POLICY:

Agencies interested in providing Children First services in 2017, including agencies that currently have a Children First program, must submit a new Children First Program Plan (Attachment 1) prior to January 17, 2017. The plan must include a Letter of Support from the child support agency in each county/tribe that will be served by the program. A sample Letter of Support is attached (Attachment 2) .

* PROGRAM CATEGORIES:

AS--Apprenticeship Standards	FM--Financial Management Requirements	ML--Migrant Labor	TR--Transportation
CC--Child Care	FL--Foreign Labor Certification	NA--Native American Services	W-2--Wisconsin Works
CS--Child Support	IT--IT Systems	RA--Refugee Assistance	WIA--Workforce Investment Act
CF--Children First	JC--Job Center	TC--Tax Credit Programs	
CR--Civil Rights	LM--Labor Market Information	TA--Trade Assistance	

For plan year 2017, as in plan year 2016, each plan will be reviewed to determine whether it meets the core mission of the program. For those plans selected, funding will be allocated to those agencies. Agencies will be required to submit a plan which includes justification for the number of slots requested and, if an increase or decrease from previous years, the reason for the change. Additionally, child support agencies are requested to provide methodology on how cases are prioritized to obtain Children First orders. The Bureau of Child Support will notify the agencies selected and provide information regarding funding allocations for the 2017 Children First plan year.

CHILDREN FIRST FUNDS

Children First funds, up to \$400.00 per participant, are for employment and training services and activities, and are not eligible for federal financial participation (FFP). Services authorized under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act for the administration of the child support program or to meet the federal match requirements of the child support program do not qualify as Children First funding.

Case management activities are eligible for 66% FFP reimbursement. Agencies will use SPARC Line 0701 to report Children First Case Management Activities costs. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) will report these expenditures through the OCSE-396 Child Support quarterly expenditure report.

Per OCSE PIQ 12-02, there are several ways child support funding can be used to achieve the program's core mission - collecting and disbursing payments to families. The following case management activities may contribute to improving child support outcomes:

- Identifying noncustodial parents that are unemployed or experiencing other social and family circumstances that impede the parent's ability to pay child support;
- Making referrals to other service agencies;
- Tracking and monitoring child support payments;
- Follow-up and tracking noncustodial parents where the court issued an order directing a noncustodial parent to attend a work program;
- Collecting and analyzing data, as well as entering documentation in the state child support system;
- Conducting timely review and modification; and
- Providing specialized enforcement.

Case managers may be employed by private, public, or non-profit community organizations pursuant to a cooperative agreement or contract. If a case manager also performs functions unrelated to child support outreach or other child support purposes, the agency must allocate costs as appropriate.

The state reserves the right to decline contracts with programs that are not meeting program requirements as referred to in this Administrator's Memo and the 2017 Children First Program Guide (Attachment 4). Additionally, the state reserves the right to make other appropriate shifts in funding.

CHILDREN FIRST PROGRAM GUIDE AND CARES DATA ENTRY REQUIREMENT

The 2017 Children First Program Guide describes current state policies and procedures for operation of the program. The Guide outlines required CARES entry for all Children First participants and activities, and provides technical details regarding the requirements for tracking Children First participant data in CARES. The Child support agency must enter the court order

in KIDS, and review the 2017 Children First Program Guide for a detailed list of its responsibilities.

Agencies are expected to review this guide prior to submitting their Children First Program Plan. A copy of the program guide is attached to this memo.

CHILDREN FIRST PROGRAM MONITORING

DCF will routinely monitor various aspects of program implementation and operation, to include compliance with state statutes and policies, as well as financial monitoring of Children First programs. Adherence to the CARES participant data entry and entry of the court order in KIDS as outlined in the Children First Program Guide will be required for program reimbursement.

Children First agencies are required to complete a quarterly report. The reports are due on April 30, July 31, October 31, and January 31. Please see Attachment 3 for details.

Children First agencies are also required to complete a weekly survey of drug screening, testing, and treatment results.

CHILDREN FIRST REQUIREMENTS AND STATUTES

For additional information regarding the Children First program, please refer to Wis. Stats. §§ 49.36 and 767.55.

If you have questions regarding the Children First program, please contact BCS via [KIDPOL Request Form](#). Partners other than child support agencies may contact us at BCSINFO@wisconsin.gov.

ACTION SUMMARY STATEMENT:

Counties / W-2 agencies / tribes and consortia who plan to offer Children First in 2017 must do the following:

- Complete a Children First Program Plan using the attached “2017 Children First Program Plan” (Attachment 1).
- Obtain a signed Letter of Support from each county/tribal child support office served by the Children First Program (Attachment 2).
- Submit the 2017 Children First Program Plan and Letter(s) of Support to the Bureau of Child Support no later than January 17, 2017.***

Send plans to: Attn: Phyllis Fuller
 Bureau of Child Support
 PO Box 7935
 Madison, WI 53707-7935

or Email to: phyllis.fuller@wisconsin.gov or Fax to: Phyllis Fuller (608) 267-2824

CONTACT:

DCF Regional Coordinators

Attachments: [2017 Children First Program Plan](#) (Attachment 1)
 [Child Support Agency Letter of Support](#) (Attachment 2)
 [Children First Program Quarterly Report](#) (Attachment 3)
 [2017 Children First Program Guide](#) (Attachment 4)

cc: 2016 CF Agencies