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Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan

for

State/Territory Wisconsin

FFY 2022 – 24

Version: Amendment 2

Plan Status: Approved as of 2023-09-29 15:01:10 GMT

This Plan describes the Child Care and Development Fund program to be administered by the state or territory for the period from 10/1/2021 to 9/30/2024, as provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations. The Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including amending the options selected or described.

For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

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Introduction and How to Approach Plan Development

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program provides resources to state, territory, and tribal grantees that enable low-income parents to work or pursue education and training so that they can better support their families while at the same time promoting the learning and development of their children. The CCDF program also provides funding to enhance the quality of child care for all children.

The CCDF Plan is how states and territories apply for CCDF funding (658E (a)) and is the primary mechanism that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) uses to determine state and territory compliance with the requirements of the law and rule (98.16). ACF acknowledges that in the FY 2022 – 2024 Plan, states and territories may still be operating under approved waivers related to the COVID-19 pandemic and where appropriate plan responses should reflect the approved waivers. The CCDF Plan allows states and territories to describe their implementation of the CCDF program and it is organized into the following sections:

1. Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems and Funding Sources
2. Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education
3. Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families
4. Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Children
5. Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings
6. Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce
7. Support Continuous Quality Improvement
8. Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

These organizational categories reflect key goals of an integrated system of child care for low-income working families. Although the Plan is divided into sections for reporting and accountability purposes, ACF encourages Lead Agencies to approach the Plan in a cross-cutting, integrated manner. The intention is that grantees and the federal government will be able to use this information to track and assess progress, determine the need for technical assistance (TA), and determine compliance with specific requirements.

Citations

ACF recognizes that Lead Agencies use different mechanisms to establish policies, such as state statute, regulations, administrative rules, or policy manuals or policy issuances. When asked to provide a citation in the CCDF Plan, Lead Agencies should list the citation(s) for the policy that clearly identifies and establishes the requirement and that allows the Lead Agency to enforce the requirement. Lead Agencies may list multiple sources as needed to cover all types of providers receiving CCDF (e.g., policies for licensed providers may be established in licensing regulations, and policies for license-exempt providers may be in subsidy rules). These citations are intended to provide documentation to support the requested information but not replace requested responses or descriptions. Complete answers must include citations, responses, and descriptions.

CCDF Plan Submission

States and territories will submit their Plans electronically through the ACF-118 electronic submission site. The ACF-118 site will include all language and questions included in the final CCDF Plan Preprint template approved by the Office of Management and Budget. Please note that the format of the questions on the ACF-118 site could be modified from the Word version of the document to ensure compliance with Section 508 policies regarding accessibility to electronic and information technology for individuals with disabilities.

(See <http://www.section508.gov/> for more information.)

In responding to questions, states and territories are asked to provide brief, specific summaries and/or bullet points only with specific language that responds to the question. Do not use tables or copy and paste charts, add attachments, or paste manuals into the Plan. All information and materials developed to support CCDF implementation and information reported in the CCDF Plan are subject to review by ACF as part of ongoing oversight and monitoring efforts.

1 Define Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems and Funding Sources

This section identifies the leadership for the CCDF program in each Lead Agency and the entities and individuals who will participate in the implementation of the program. It also identifies the stakeholders that were consulted to develop the Plan and who the Lead Agency collaborates with to implement services. Respondents are asked to identify how match and maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds are used. Lead Agencies explain their coordination with child care resource and referral (CCR&R) systems and describe their efforts on their disaster preparedness and response plans to support continuity of operations in response to emergencies.

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 appended hereto (658D; 658E(c)(1) and 98.16 (a)). Note: An amendment to the CCDF State Plan is required if the Lead Agency changes or if the Lead Agency official changes.

1.1.1 Which Lead Agency is designated to administer the CCDF program?

Identify the Lead Agency or joint interagency office designated by the state or territory. ACF will send official grant correspondence, such as grant awards, grant adjustments, Plan approvals, and disallowance notifications, to the designated contact identified here (658D(a) and 98.16(a)).

a. Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Office Information:

Name of Lead Agency: **Wisconsin Department of Children and Families**

Street Address: **201 W. Washington Ave.**

City: **Madison**

State: **Wisconsin**

ZIP Code: **53703**

Web Address for Lead Agency: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/>

b. Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Official Contact Information:

Lead Agency Official First Name: **Emilie**

Lead Agency Official Last Name: **Amundson**

Title: **Secretary**

Phone Number: **608-422-7067**

Email Address: **Emilie.Amundson@wisconsin.gov**

1.1.2 Who is the 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. ACF 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, please identify the Co-Administrator or the person with administrative responsibilities and include his or her contact information.

Amended: Effective Date 01/23/2023

a. CCDF Administrator Contact Information:

CCDF Administrator First Name: **Priya**

CCDF Administrator Last Name: **Bhatia**

Title of the CCDF Administrator: **Administrator, Division of Early Care and Education**

Phone Number: **414-270-4750**

Email Address: **priya.bhatia@wisconsin.gov**

Amended: Effective Date 01/23/2023

b. CCDF Co-Administrator Contact Information (if applicable):

CCDF Co-Administrator First Name:

CCDF Co-Administrator Last Name:

Title of the CCDF Co-Administrator:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Description of the Role of the Co-Administrator:

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 (658D(b) and 98.16 (d)(1)). 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 CCDF program rules and policies are set or established at:

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 (98.16(d)(1)). Check one.

a. All program rules and policies are set or established at the state or territory level. If checked, skip to question 1.2.2.

b. 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:

A. State or territory. Identify the entity.

B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the eligibility policies the local entity(ies) can set.

C. Other. Describe:

ii. Sliding-fee scale is set by the:

A. State or territory. Identify the entity.

B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the sliding fee scale policies the local entity(ies) can set.

C. Other. Describe:

iii. Payment rates and payment policies are set by the:

A. State or territory. Identify the entity.

B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the payment rates and payment policies the local entity(ies) can set.

C. Other. Describe:

iv. Licensing standards and processes are set by the:

A. State or territory. Identify the entity.

B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of licensing standards and processes the local entity(ies) can set.

C. Other. Describe.

v. Standards and monitoring processes for license-exempt providers are set by the:

A. State or territory. Identify the entity.

B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of standards and monitoring processes for license-exempt providers the local entity(ies) can set.

C. Other. Describe:

vi. Quality improvement activities, including QRIS are set by the:

A. State or territory. Identify the entity.

B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of quality improvement activities the local entity(ies) can set.

C. Other. Describe:

vii. Other. List and describe any other program rules and policies that are set at a level other than the state or territory level:

1.2.2 Implementation responsibility

The Lead Agency has broad authority to operate (i.e., implement activities) through other

agencies, as long as it retains overall responsibility. Complete the table below to identify which entity(ies) implements or performs CCDF services.

a. 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 | Community-based organizations |
|--|------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| Who conducts eligibility determinations? | [] | [] | [x] | [] | [] |
| Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)? | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] |
| Who issues payments? | [x] | [] | [] | [] | [x] |
| Who monitors licensed providers? | [x] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| Who monitors license-exempt providers? | [x] | [] | [] | [] | [] |
| Who operates the quality improvement activities? | [x] | [] | [] | [x] | [] |

b. Other. List and describe any other state or territory agencies or partners that implement or perform CCDF services and identify their responsibilities.

In Milwaukee County, eligibility is determined by a State Agency, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) Milwaukee Enrollment Services (MilES). Further, the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), a non-profit agency, determines eligibility for migrant farmworker families.

1.2.3 Processes to oversee and monitor CCDF administration and implementation

Describe the processes the Lead Agency uses to oversee and monitor CCDF administration and implementation responsibilities performed by other agencies as reported above in 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 (98.16(b)). In the description include:

- Written agreements. 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 (98.11(a)(3)).
 - Tasks to be performed
 - Schedule for completing tasks
 - Budget which itemizes categorical expenditures in accordance with CCDF requirements
 - Monitoring and auditing procedures
 - Indicators or measures to assess performance of those agencies
- Any other processes to oversee and monitor other agencies.

The Lead Agency performs an annual Targeted Case Review (TCR) of up to 800 child care cases that includes all tribal, county, MilES, and Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA) cases. The TCR process mirrors the three-year Federal Improper Payment (FIP) review and identifies both eligibility and fiscal related performance issues. Additionally, the Lead Agency signs a calendar year contract with both tribal and county agencies that provide child care services. This contract includes multiple subrecipient monitoring requirements and performance standards, such as timely processing of child care subsidy applications, accuracy of child care authorizations, and conducting site visits for certified providers. Agencies are required to meet the standard of 80% accuracy of child care authorizations and must conduct one unannounced visit to each certified child care program annually. For equity purposes the Lead Agency is in the process of developing a benchmark specifically related to tribal and small county agencies due to the reduced caseloads of these agencies. This benchmark will ensure all child care agencies have the opportunity to meet identified benchmarks and receive annual performance awards. The Lead Agency regularly monitors service deliverables for each of the ten Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies across the state. The Lead Agency measures the four core services provided by CCR&R agencies: referrals to families, technical assistance to families, assistance to early education programs, and community collaborations and visibility. For example, the Lead Agency measures the number of unique families receiving referral services, the number of unique families receiving referrals to other support services, and the number of trainings and/or technical assistance interactions with both families and providers. Each CCR&R agency must also attempt to serve all clients that contact them seeking support for the types of services offered under this contract. The Lead Agency has a contract with DHS and MilES to provide eligibility functions for all Wisconsin Child Care Subsidy recipients in Milwaukee County. This contract outlines how eligibility functions will be completed as well as monitoring and staff training requirements.

1.2.4 Information systems availability to public agencies

Upon request, and to the extent practicable and appropriate, Lead Agencies must ensure 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 must be made available to other public agencies. This includes public agencies in other states, for their use in administering child care or related programs (98.15(a)(11)). Assure by describing how the Lead Agency makes child care information systems (e.g., subsidy, registry, and QRIS systems) available to public agencies in other states.

The Lead Agency's Division of Management Services (DMS), Bureau of Information Technology Services (BITS) has agreed to work with any other state or territory if a request is made regarding current information or system technology. Assurance has been provided by the Department's IT Director that any requested information will be shared if practicable and appropriate.

1.2.5 Confidential and personal identifiable information policies

Lead Agencies must have in effect policies to govern the use and disclosure of confidential and personally identifiable information about children and families receiving CCDF assistance and child care providers receiving CCDF funds (98.15(b)(13)). Certify by describing the Lead Agency's policies related to the use and disclosure of confidential and personally identifiable information.

The following Wisconsin Statutes provide guidelines around confidentiality in the child care program area: s.49.32(9), s.49.32(10), s.49.32(10m), s.49.81, s.49.83, and s.19.69. Confidentiality guidelines for workers also include: 1) only staff with a User ID and security access are permitted to view information on child care systems, and 2) registered users are prohibited from sharing a User ID/Password with anyone. Staff agree to all confidentiality requirements when they request access.

1.3 Consultation in the Development of the CCDF Plan

The Lead Agency is responsible for developing the CCDF Plan, which serves as the application for a 3-year implementation period. As part of the Plan development process, Lead Agencies must consult with the following:

- (1) Appropriate representatives of units of general purpose local government— (658D(b)(2); 98.10(c); 98.12(b); 98.14(b)). General purpose local governments are defined by the U.S. Census at https://www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/govts/20120301_cspan_govts_def_3.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) (658E(c)(2)(R); 98.15(b)(1)) or similar coordinating body pursuant to 98.14(a)(1)(vii).
- (3) Indian tribe(s) or tribal organization(s) within the state. This consultation should be done in a timely manner and at the option of the Indian tribe(s) or tribal organization(s) (658D(b)(1)(E)).

Consultation involves meeting with or otherwise obtaining input from an appropriate agency in the development of the state or territory CCDF Plan. Describe the partners engaged to provide services under the CCDF program as described in question 1.4.1.

1.3.1 Consultation efforts

Describe the Lead Agency's consultation efforts in the development of the CCDF Plan. Note: Lead Agencies must describe in a. – c. consultation efforts with required partners listed in Rule and Statute. ACF recognizes that there is great value in consulting with other entities and has provided element d. for Lead Agencies to identify consultation efforts with other agencies or organizations.

a. Consultation with general purpose local governments.

Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with appropriate representatives of general purpose local governments.

The Lead Agency meets with county and tribal representatives on a monthly basis and provides constant updates on the status of the CCDF State Plan. During meetings of the Child Care Advisory Committee (CCAC), the Child Care Program Committee (CCPC), and the Economic Support Policy Advisory Committee (ES PAC), drafts of the proposed Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) State Plan language are shared with the county and tribal staff for their review, edits, and suggested changes to the responses developed by the Lead Agency.

b. Consultation with state advisory council or similar coordinating body.

Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body.

The Lead Agency 's Secretary is one of the co-chairs for the Governor’s Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC). The Lead Agency participates in Committee meetings of the ECAC. The Lead Agency participates in all aspects of the ECAC, from meeting planning and support to leadership and direction. The Lead Agency plays a major role in the development of recommendations sent to the Governor on behalf of the Council. The ECAC was directly invited to review the CCDF State Plan during the formal review time. ECAC members will receive a full update on the final version of the CCDF State Plan at an upcoming meeting.

- c. Consultation with Indian tribes or tribal organizations within the State.

Describe, if applicable, how the Lead Agency consulted with Indian tribes(s) or tribal organizations(s) within the state. Note: The CCDF regulations recognize the need for states to conduct formal, structured consultation with Tribal governments, including Tribal leadership. Many states and tribes have consultation policies and procedures in place.

The Lead Agency conducted three formal consultation meetings with the Tribal Governments. The Consultation meetings were held on March 11th, 18th, and 23rd, 2021 and included tribal leadership and direct service child care supervisors and staff. The Consultation meetings were structured around receiving input on all aspects of the CCDF State Plan. The Lead Agency walked through each section of the CCDF State Plan and received tribal feedback on every response. Additionally, the Lead Agency provided all Tribal Governments with a draft of the CCDF State Plan prior to its release during the public comment period.

- d. Consultation with other entities, agencies or organizations.

Describe any other entities, agencies, or organizations consulted on the development of the CCDF Plan.

The Wisconsin Head Start Collaboration Office (HSCO), which is part of the Lead Agency, was a significant contributor to the CCDF State Plan as was the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP). WECCP is a group that focuses on collaboration among many public and private agencies, associations, and individuals that care about Wisconsin's young children and their families. The Lead Agency asked subscribers to the WECCP listserv to comment on the Plan.

1.3.2 Statewide or territory-wide public hearing process

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 (658D(b)(1)(C); 98.16(f)). Reminder: Lead Agencies are required to 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. At a minimum, this description must include:

- a. Date of the public hearing.

Reminder: Must be no earlier than January 1, 2021, which is 9 months prior to the October 1, 2021, effective date of the Plan. If more than one public hearing was held, please enter one date (e.g., the date of the first hearing, the most recent hearing or any hearing date that demonstrates this requirement).

06/01/2021

b. Date of notice of public hearing (date for the notice of public hearing identified in a.. Reminder: Must be at least 20 calendar days prior to the date of the public hearing. If more than one public hearing was held, enter one date of notice (e.g., the date of the first notice, the most recent notice or any date of notice that demonstrates this requirement).

05/03/2021

c. How was the public notified about the public hearing? Please include specific website links if used to provide notice.

Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) public hearing website (<https://publicmeetings.wi.gov/>), Listserv message, Lead Agency's website, and social media posts.

Specific links include:

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/register/2021/785A3/register/public_notices/public_notice_notice_of_public_hearing/public_notice_notice_of_public_hearing

d. Hearing site or method, including how geographic regions of the state or territory were addressed.

The lead agency utilized Zoom to allow access throughout the state.

e. 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.)

The Lead Agency posted the draft CCDF State Plan on its public-facing website for public review. Additionally, the draft plan was translated into Spanish and other languages as requested.

f. How was the information provided by the public taken into consideration regarding the provision of child care services under this Plan?

Following the public hearing process all written and verbal feedback was reviewed and evaluated, by the Lead Agency, for inclusion into the CCDF State Plan. All responses will be retained per Wisconsin Record Retention Schedules and made available to anyone per the Open Records Request process.

1.3.3 Public availability of plan, amendments and waivers

Lead Agencies are required to make the submitted and final Plan, any Plan amendments, and any approved requests for temporary relief (i.e., waivers) publicly available on a website (98.14(d)). Please note that a Lead Agency must submit Plan amendments within 60 days of a substantial change in the Lead Agency's program. (Additional information may be found at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/pi-2009-01.>)

a. Website link for plan, amendments and waivers

Provide the website link to where the Plan, any Plan amendments, and/or waivers are available. Note: A Plan amendment is required if the website address where the Plan is posted is changed.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/ccdbg>

b. Other strategies for plan, amendments and waivers availability

Describe any other strategies that the Lead Agency uses to make the CCDF Plan and Plan amendments available to the public (98.14(d)). Check all that apply and describe the strategies below, including any relevant website links as examples.

Working with advisory committees. Describe:

The CCDF Plan was shared with Lead Agency advisory committees via email and a link to the Plan is available on the Lead Agency's public website:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/rptplangrants>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/rptplangrants>.

Working with child care resource and referral agencies. Describe:

The CCDF Plan was shared with CCR&R agencies via email distribution to listservs and a link to the Plan is available on the Lead Agency's public website:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/rptplangrants>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/rptplangrants>.

Providing translation in other languages. Describe:

The Lead Agency made the CCDF State Plan available in Spanish.

Sharing through social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, email). Describe:

The Lead Agency utilized social media (Twitter, Facebook, and email listservs) to notify the public of the CCDF State Plan and provided necessary weblinks to view the document.

Providing notification to stakeholders (e.g., parent and family groups, provider groups, advocacy groups). Describe:

The Lead Agency sent emails via listservs notifying provider and parent groups that a draft of the 2022-2024 CCDF Plan was available for review on the Lead Agency's webpage: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/ccdbg> .

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Working with statewide afterschool networks or similar coordinating entities for out-of-school time.

Other. Describe:

1.4 Coordination with Partners to Expand Accessibility and Continuity of Care

Lead Agencies are required to describe how the state or territory will efficiently, and to the extent practicable, coordinate child care services supported by CCDF with programs operating at the federal, state/territory, and local levels for children in the programs listed below. This includes programs for the benefit of Indian children, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care (98.14(a)(1)).

1.4.1 Accessibility and continuity of care

Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates the provision of child care services with the

following programs to expand accessibility and continuity of care and to assist children enrolled in early childhood programs in receiving full-day services that meet the needs of working families (658E(c)(2)(O); 98.12(a); 98.14(a)).

This list includes agencies or programs required by law or rule, along with a list of optional partners that Lead Agencies potentially would coordinate with over the next 3 years to expand accessibility and continuity of care and to assist children enrolled in early childhood programs in receiving full-day services.

Include in the descriptions the goals of this coordination, such as:

- extending the day or year of services for families.
- smoothing transitions for children between programs or as they age into school.
- enhancing and aligning the quality of services for infants and toddlers through school-age children.
- linking comprehensive services to children in child care or school-age settings.
- developing the supply of quality care for vulnerable populations (as defined by the Lead Agency) in child care and out-of-school time settings.

a. Lead Agency coordination with required agencies

The Lead Agency is required to coordinate with the following agencies. Provide a description for how coordination occurred.

- i. Appropriate representatives of the general purpose local government, which can include counties, municipalities, or townships/towns. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency meets with tribal and county representatives on a monthly basis and provides constant updates on the status of the CCDF State Plan. During meetings of the CCAC, CCPC, and ES PAC, discussions focus on the goals of coordination of services, identifying safe, high-quality child care for families, family-friendly eligibility practices, and expedited and accurate development of child care authorizations to ensure continuity of care.

- ii. State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act). Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency continues to be a full and engaged partner in the system building efforts of the ECAC. The goals of the ECAC include: the completion of a comprehensive assessment of current issues confronting the early childhood system; the development of recommendations for increasing the overall participation of children in existing federal and state child care; and the creation of recommendations regarding child care educators and providers statewide. Additionally, the Wisconsin Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan was developed during the first year of the Preschool Development Grant in 2020. It outlines a series of strategies to increase coordination and through development of additional collaborative bodies, including the Governor's Leadership Council on the Early Years (LCEY) and the Interagency Cooperative on Early Years (ICEY) initiated in 2020 and 2021, respectively. These additional groups ensure broad awareness of the interests and needs of children and families that are impacted by numerous government agencies, as well as enhanced focus on alignment of policies and

efforts across early childhood programs administered by state government. Finally, an Equity Advisory Council (EAC) was established in 2021 through the work of PDG and the Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITPP) to increase awareness of the lived experiences of vulnerable and underserved populations as they navigate early childhood programs and offer recommendations to address barriers and gaps.

Check here if the Lead Agency has official representation and a decision-making role in the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body.

- iii. Indian tribe(s) and/or tribal organization(s), at the option of individual tribes. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results, including which tribe(s) was (were) consulted:

The Lead Agency meets with tribal staff and managers on a monthly basis to discuss new policy and system development options. During meetings of the CCAC, CCPC, WITCCA, and ES PAC, the Lead Agency discusses coordinated solutions to the tribal specific CCDF requirements. Specific goals identified include increasing culturally responsive trainings and presentations to increase the supply of quality care to tribal children.

N/A—Check here if there are no Indian tribes and/or tribal organizations in the state.

- iv. State/territory agency(ies) responsible for programs for children with special needs, including early intervention programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part C for infants and toddlers and Part B, Section 619 for preschool). Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency meets frequently with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and DHS to ensure coordination of services for young children with special needs. The Lead Agency has developed resource and training materials to support the professional development of the early care and education workforce to be confident in providing inclusive child care programming. The Lead Agency has created increased coordination with DHS Birth to Three and DPI Early Childhood Special Education coordinators and regularly meets with team leads to identify strategies to support shared professional development opportunities with the goal of enhancing child care programming staff to provide full-day child care access for children with special needs. Cross-agency efforts have included developing webpages to provide comprehensive information for families, training opportunities for early care and education professionals across the state, and the development of training modules to support inclusion in child care programs. Information can be found at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>. The Lead Agency actively participates on the Birth to Three Inter-Agency Coordination Council with the purpose of communicating recommendations for effective implementation of the early intervention system, including services provided in child care settings to support children with special needs. Ensuring increased access to services is a priority for this council.

- v. State/territory office/director for Head Start state collaboration. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency includes the Head Start State Collaboration Office and has extensive collaborations with the Director. These collaborations include planning with

the Director to ensure that programs are able to meet both the Head Start Standards and CCDF requirements. The coordination goals include having all Head Start programs participating in YoungStar, Wisconsin's Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) system, in order to meet the Head Start standards and identifying ways that families enrolled in Head Start programs can utilize the child care subsidy program. In addition, Head Start participates in the Interagency Cooperative on Early Years (ICEY), along with other B-5 Early Childhood State System program representatives.

- vi. State/territory agency responsible for public health, including the agency responsible for immunizations. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

Under Wis. Statutes, s.252.04 and Wis. Admin. Code DHS 144, within 30 school days after a child is admitted to child care, the center must have on file evidence that the child has completed the first immunization for each vaccine required for the child's age and/or a record that the child is on schedule for the basic and recall (booster) immunizations, or shall present a written waiver. The Lead Agency's administrative rules require child care programs to maintain child records, including child immunization history, enrollment forms and attendance records, so an accurate measurement of compliance with DHS immunization requirements can be made during onsite audits. Immunization requirements for child care programs can be found here:

(<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/reqs.htm>)

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/reqs.htm>. The Lead Agency annually provides DHS with contact information for all licensed child care programs. DHS then sends licensed programs a required report/assessment which the programs use to submit to DHS the most recent immunization records on file. The Lead Agency works extensively with DHS and has coordinated with them in the development of a computer system that will allow public health data to be used for research purposes related to early childhood issues. The Lead Agency, in conjunction with DHS, created Active Early: A Wisconsin Guide for Improving Childhood Physical Activity and the companion Healthy Bites: A Wisconsin Guide for Improving Childhood Nutrition in 2011 with a revision to the Healthy Bites in 2014. Active Early's corresponding four-hour training course for child care providers and parents and Healthy Bites' eight-hour module are promoted by the Lead Agency and DHS to ensure health-related information reaches providers and parents.

- vii. State/territory agency responsible for employment services/workforce development. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency ensures coordination between the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program and the Wisconsin Works (W-2) TANF program. W-2 and Wisconsin Shares eligibility workers disseminate information that supports parents' access to high-quality, affordable child care arrangements that allow a parent to be engaged in their W-2 approved employability plan activity. The Lead Agency ensures strong coordination of W-2 and child care policies that support low-income families' access to needed supports to attain and maintain employment. For example, print materials are disseminated widely to W-2 agencies to ensure families are aware of child care subsidy program

- viii. State/territory agency responsible for public education, including Prekindergarten (PreK). Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency actively participates on the DPI State Superintendent's Advisory Committee on 4-Year-Old Kindergarten. That participation ensures open

communication and dissemination of information related to early care and education quality improvement efforts. The Lead Agency is a founding member of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) Leadership Team. The WMELS provides the framework for families, professionals, and policymakers to understand the connection between the foundations of early childhood, K-12 educational experiences, and lifelong learning. The Leadership Team role ensures fidelity of approved training content and approved trainer competencies and implementation of WMELS Guiding Principles. The Wisconsin Birth to 5 Statewide Strategic Plan introduces additional collaborative bodies, LCEY and ICEY, working to ensure coordinated programming and children's smooth transitions from early childhood into K-12, and data sharing regarding children's access to state programs from birth to age 5 and beyond. Collaborative approaches to child care and four-year-old kindergarten (4K) settings are promoted throughout Wisconsin to provide full-day care arrangements that meet the needs of parents and families.

- ix. State/territory agency responsible for child care licensing. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency is responsible for licensing functions as well as the child care subsidy program. Both program areas are part of the same Division and coordinate on all aspects of the programs to ensure the highest level of service to the children and families across the state.

- x. State/territory agency responsible for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and other relevant nutrition programs. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency coordinates with DPI, which has primary responsibility for the administration of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and with the Wisconsin CACFP Sponsors Forum, a group of organizations that administer CACFP in Wisconsin's family child care programs. The Lead Agency regularly communicates with DPI and child care programs to promote provider use of the CACFP as a best practice and includes this quality practice within the business and professional practices section of YoungStar. Programs receive support around participating in the CACFP through technical consultation services delivered by CCR&R agencies and the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA). In addition, DPI regularly shares information with quality and regulatory areas of the Lead Agency.

- xi. McKinney-Vento state coordinators for homeless education and other agencies providing services for children experiencing homelessness and, to the extent practicable, local McKinney-Vento liaisons. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

Wisconsin's focus on equity and inclusion includes Lead and partnering agency participation in Collaborating Partners, where the DPI Education for Homeless Children and Youth staff ensure coordination for serving homeless families in determination of eligibility for Wisconsin Shares. Braided funding supports staff time for a Homeless Outreach Specialist to promote collaborations and connections between regional stakeholders. This position promotes effective practices related to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, ensuring equal access to early childhood educational opportunities. In addition, the newly created Equity Advisory Council (EAC) will work to raise awareness of the unique needs and hopes of all vulnerable and underserved populations, including homeless children and families.

- xii. State/territory agency responsible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

(TANF) program. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency has direct responsibility for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and CCDF Programs. Administrators, Deputy Administrators and other assigned staff from both program areas meet monthly to coordinate services such as the availability at the Jobs Centers of onsite child care services that enable vulnerable populations to receive comprehensive services at the same location. This includes job training and other technical assistance for the parents and quality child care services for their children. Additional coordination goals include the exchange of information about the Wisconsin Shares program to contracted agencies administering the Wisconsin Works (TANF) program in order to ensure families participating in TANF programs receive information on the child care subsidy program and the importance of choosing high-quality child care for their children. Additionally, both programs partnered in a Demonstration Pilot Project that covers the parent share portion of child care costs for individuals participating in a TANF program and receiving Wisconsin Shares. The purpose of this project is to examine how the incentive of covering all of the child care costs for a parent impact the use of subsidized child care as well as the engagement and employment outcomes for parents such as job retention. Through the CCDBG/OPRE grant, the Lead Agency is analyzing the use of CCDF and TANF to evaluate the effectiveness of CCDBG reauthorization changes.

xiii. Agency responsible for Medicaid and the state Children's Health Insurance Program.

Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency coordinates with DHS to ensure that information about Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is available to families at local human services agencies. These same agencies are contracted by the Lead Agency to administer the child care subsidy program. The Lead Agency coordinates with DHS for the child care eligibility application process with FoodShare, Medicaid programs, and W-2 programs through the combined online ACCESS application process. This single combined application supports greater access and provides linkages to other services. The Lead Agency is working to further identify and reduce inefficiencies and barriers that families experience when navigating the early care and education programs administered by multiple agencies. This collaborative infrastructure involves participation by the Lead and partnering agencies on the Governor's Leadership Cooperative on Early Years (LCEY) and Health Equity Council (HEC). The Governor's HEC is charged with creating a comprehensive plan to achieve long-lasting and equitable health outcomes for all Wisconsinites. The plan will address health disparities based on race, economic status, education level, history of incarceration, and geographic location.

xiv. State/territory agency responsible for mental health. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

In pursuit of equitable and quality outcomes for all children interacting with Wisconsin early childhood programs, the Lead Agency coordinates with DHS and the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health (OCMH). OCMH monitors 48 indicators of child well-being, including positive factors and interventions as well as negative factors. OCMH reports on the indicators annually to the Wisconsin Legislature in order to gauge how Wisconsin is supporting young children and indicate places for improvement. The Lead Agency participates with OCMH as part of a Collective Impact with other state agencies and community partners. In addition, the Lead Agency contracted with the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (WI-AIMH) and its work promoting the Wisconsin Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. A recommendation has been made by the ECAC to address the challenge of early suspension and expulsion and the

resulting inequities, by investing in training and coaching for caregivers and creating a statewide infant and early childhood mental health consultation system to support the social and emotional learning for children.

- xv. Child care resource and referral agencies, child care consumer education organizations, and providers of early childhood education training and professional development.

Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency contracts with the Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), the umbrella organization for the state's nine CCR&R agencies. Each CCR&R agency provides four core services for the entire population, including tribal communities, within their designated service delivery area (SDA). Each agency must ensure that all services are available in a family's and/or provider's preferred language and, when reasonable, in locations convenient to families and/or providers. The four core services include: 1. Referrals to Families: Each CCR&R agency ensures that all families in their SDA have access to comprehensive, high-quality consumer education and referrals so that they can make informed decisions about child care and school-age care services. Specifically, they provide consumer education to families related to the selection of child care and school-age care, information on how to recognize quality early care, the developmental benefits of choosing high-quality, and referrals to other appropriate human service and community resources. In addition, the Lead Agency partnering with the Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board (CANPB) to enhance family navigator programs through implementation of consistent standards and training for staff of family resource centers. 2. Technical Assistance to Families: Each CCR&R agency ensures that all families in their SDA have access to education on child development, developmental screening, choosing quality child care and school-age care, and other parenting supports. 3. Training and Technical Assistance to Child Care and School-Age Care Providers: Each CCR&R agency ensures that all providers in their SDA have access to high-quality training and technical assistance opportunities to ensure that families have access to high-quality care. They must offer high-quality, evidence-based training opportunities to both regulated and unregulated providers. They must offer services and resources to help providers offer high-quality care and attain higher skill levels through newsletters, electronic communications, lending libraries and resource rooms. They must offer services to help unregulated providers become regulated and connect to YoungStar. Finally, each agency implements strategies to target underserved populations, including license-exempt family child care providers, programs that have opted for automated 2 Star ratings in YoungStar, unregulated providers, and tribal communities. 4. Community Collaborations and Visibility: Each CCR&R agency is a highly visible partner in their SDA with existing early education stakeholders and community leaders, as well as a liaison between families, providers, and other community stakeholders. The Lead Agency regularly monitors service deliverables for each CCR&R agency around these four core services. For example, the Lead Agency measures the number of unique families receiving referral services, the number of unique families receiving referrals to other support services, and the number of trainings and/or technical assistance interactions with both families and providers. Each CCR&R agency must also attempt to serve all clients that contact them seeking support for the types of services offered under this contract.

- xvi. Statewide afterschool network or other coordinating entity for out-of-school time care (if applicable). Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Wisconsin Afterschool Network (WAN) and the Lead Agency collaborate in a number of different ways with the goal of creating and supporting quality school-age

programs to meet the needs of working families with school-age children. WAN is an active participant in the development and refinement of the school-age criteria for YoungStar. In addition, the Lead Agency and WAN have collaborated on a number of professional development resources for school-age providers, including creation of regional institutes and webinars that help increase the quality of school-age programs across the state.

xvii. Agency responsible for emergency management and response. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:

The Lead Agency works closely with the Division of Emergency Management to ensure that all child care related policies, systems, and resources are available to Emergency Management staff in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. Lead Agency staff also participate in Federal and State disaster training exercises bi-annually. This process was solidified during the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for multiple agencies to provide staff to the Emergency Management Center for distribution and coordination of PPE supplies across the state.

b. Coordination goals, processes and results with optional partners

The following are examples of optional partners a state might coordinate with to provide services. Check which optional partners the Lead Agency coordinates with and describe the coordination goals, processes and results.

i. State/territory/local agencies with Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grants. Describe:

The Lead Agency includes the HSCO and collaborates to coordinate services through the nine Early Head Start–Child Care Partnership (EHS–CCP) located across the state. Specific collaboration efforts are included in the Head Start five-year plan.

ii. State/territory institutions for higher education, including community colleges. Describe:

The Lead Agency has piloted a specific project in the City of Milwaukee where 30 child care providers can participate in free early care and education related course work at the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC). (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/53206/53206-teach-reward.pdf>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/53206/53206-teach-reward.pdf>. The Lead Agency also collaborates with technical colleges and universities across the state in the development of online course work for early care and education staff.

iii. Other federal, state, local, and/or private agencies providing early childhood and school-age/youth-serving developmental services. Describe:

iv. State/territory agency responsible for implementing the Maternal and Child Home Visitation programs grant. Describe:

The Wisconsin Family Foundations Home Visiting Program (FFHV) is led by the Lead Agency and is funded through a combination of federal and state dollars. FFHV programs are voluntary for families and use intensive, nationally proven models and strategies to support pregnant women and

families with a child under five.

v. Agency responsible for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Program. Describe:

vi. State/territory agency responsible for child welfare. Describe:

Regular meetings occur between leadership in early care and education and child welfare to assure ongoing communication and information sharing about the range of areas related to out-of-home care and child care subsidy collaboration. Because it is an important goal for children in an out-of-home placement to have continuity of care in their child care if possible, and to be able to access quality child care during and after the out-of-home placement, a guide, (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5248.pdf>) Wisconsin Shares for Children in Out-of-Home Care Placements, was created to help those caring for children who have been placed in out-of-home care navigate the child care subsidy program. The guide is made available on the Wisconsin Shares webpage and is provided by child care eligibility workers and through Child Protective Services staff.

vii. Provider groups or associations. Describe:

The Lead Agency conducts Networking meetings twice a year in five different locations across the state and virtually since the pandemic. Participants include representatives from provider associations and partner agencies that work with child care providers. The purpose of these meetings is to exchange information, collaborate on projects and initiatives, and problem solve issues or concerns occurring in the specific regions of the state.

viii. Parent groups or organizations. Describe:

ix. Other. Describe:

1.5 Optional Use of Combined Funds, CCDF Matching, and Maintenance-of-Effort Funds

Optional Use of Combined Funds: States and territories have the option to combine CCDF funds with any required program in 1.4.1. These programs include those operating at the federal, state, and local levels for children in preschool programs, tribal early childhood programs, and other early childhood programs, including those serving infants and toddlers with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care (658E(c)(2)(O)(ii)).

Combining funds could include blending multiple funding streams, pooling funds, or layering funds together from multiple funding streams to expand and/or enhance services for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children and families to allow for the delivery of comprehensive quality care that meets the needs of children and families. For example, state/territory agencies may use multiple funding sources to offer grants or contracts to programs to deliver services; a state/territory may allow a county/local government to use

coordinated funding streams; or policies may be in place that allow local programs to layer CCDF funds with additional funding sources to pay for full-day, full-year child care that meets Early Head Start/Head Start Program Performance Standards or state/territory Prekindergarten requirements in addition to state/territory child care licensing requirements.

As a reminder, CCDF funds may be used in collaborative efforts with Head Start programs to provide comprehensive child care and development services for children who are eligible for both programs. In fact, the coordination and collaboration between Head Start and CCDF is strongly encouraged by sections 640(g)(1)(D) and (E); 640(h); 641(d)(2)(H)(v); and 642(e)(3) of the Head Start Act in the provision of full working day, full calendar year comprehensive services. To implement such collaborative programs, which share, for example, space, equipment, or materials, grantees may layer several funding streams so that seamless services are provided (Policy and Program Guidance for the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/acf_im_ohs_15_03.pdf).

1.5.1 Combined funding for CCDF services

Does the Lead Agency choose to combine funding for CCDF services for any programs identified in 1.4.1 (98.14(a)(3))?

No (If no, skip to question 1.5.2)

Yes. If yes, describe at a minimum:

- a. How you define “combine”
- b. Which funds you will combine?
- c. What is your purpose and expected outcomes for combining funds, such as extending the day or year of services available (i.e., full-day, full-year programming for working families), smoothing transitions for children, enhancing and aligning quality of services, linking comprehensive services to children in child care, or developing the supply of child care for vulnerable populations? Note: Responses should align with the goals, processes and results describe in 1.4.1.
- d. How you will be combining multiple sets of funding, such as at the state/territory level, local level, program level?
- e. How are the funds tracked and method of oversight

1.5.2 CCDF Matching and MOE Requirements

Which of the following funds does the Lead Agency intend to use to meet the CCDF matching and MOE requirements described in 98.55(e) and 98.55(h)? Check all that apply.

Note: Lead Agencies that use Prekindergarten funds to meet matching requirements must check

Prekindergarten funds and public and/or private funds. Use of PreK for Maintenance of Effort: The CCDF Final Rule clarifies that public PreK funds may also serve as maintenance-of-effort funds as long as the state/territory can describe how it will coordinate PreK and child care services to expand the availability of child care while using public Prekindergarten funds as no more than 20 percent of the state’s or territory’s maintenance of effort or 30 percent of its matching funds in a single fiscal year (FY) (98.55(h)). If expenditures for PreK services are used to meet the maintenance-of-effort requirement, the state/territory must certify that it has not reduced its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services (98.55(h)(1); 98.15(a)(6)). Use of Private Funds for Match or Maintenance of Effort: Donated funds do not need to be under the administrative control of the Lead Agency to qualify as an expenditure for federal match. However, Lead Agencies do need to identify and designate in the state/territory Plan the donated funds given to public or private entities to implement the CCDF child care program (98.55(f)).

a. N/A—The territory is not required to meet CCDF matching and MOE requirements.

b. Public funds are used to meet the CCDF matching fund requirement. Public funds may include any general revenue funds, county or other local public funds, state-/territory-specific funds (tobacco tax, lottery), or any other public funds.

i. If checked, identify the source of funds:

State General Purpose Revenue (GPR)

c. Private donated funds are used to meet the CCDF matching funds requirement. Only private funds received by the designated entities or by the Lead Agency may be counted for match purposes (98.53(f)).

i. If checked, are those funds:

A. Donated directly to the state?

B. Donated to a separate entity(ies) designated to receive private donated funds?

ii. If checked, identify the name, address, contact, and type of entities designated to receive private donated funds:

N/A

d. State expenditures for PreK programs are used to meet the CCDF matching funds requirement. If checked, provide the estimated percentage of the matching fund requirement that will be met with Prekindergarten expenditures (not to exceed 30 percent):

i. If the percentage is more than 10 percent of the matching fund requirement, describe how the state will coordinate its Prekindergarten and child care services:

Wisconsin is a national leader in implementing 4K through the community approach. More than 95% of public-school districts statewide offer 4K education. Additionally, approximately 28% of school districts offer a 4K-community approach (4KCA) model in which the school district, private child care centers, and Head Start centers collaborate to provide services. Of those districts that offer both school-based 4K and 4KCA, the collaborative programs serve 58% of the local population.

ii. Describe the Lead Agency efforts to ensure that

Prekindergarten programs meet the needs of working parents:

4KCA programs are designed to meet the needs of working families by providing services in locations that are familiar to the children and minimize transitions between programs and services. Child care programs that provide 4KCA onsite can receive Wisconsin Shares child care authorizations based on the parent's need for child care while the parent is participating in an approved activity

e. State expenditures for Prekindergarten programs are used to meet the CCDF maintenance-of-effort requirements. If checked,

- i. Assure by describing how the Lead Agency did not reduce its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services, pursuant to 98.55(h)(1) and 98.15(a)(6).

Approximately 28% of Wisconsin school districts use the 4k-collaborative approach (4KCA) in with the school district, private child care centers, and Head Start centers collaborate to provide services. These programs meet the needs of working families by providing services in locations that are familiar to the children and minimize transitions between programs and services. Child care programs that provide 4KCA onsite can receive Wisconsin Shares child care authorizations based on the parent's need for child care while the parent is participating in an approved activity. The Lead Agency continues to support the efforts of full-day and full-year child care services through additional through the increasing of available child care slots throughout the State. Efforts include the development of public-private partnerships as well as increased subsidy payments and supportive staff training and salary enhancements.

- ii. Describe the Lead Agency efforts to ensure that Prekindergarten programs meet the needs of working parents:

A majority of Wisconsin school districts use the 4K-community approach (4KCA) in which the school district, private child care centers, and Head Start centers collaborate to provide services. These programs meet the needs of working families by providing services in locations that are familiar to the children and minimize transitions between programs and services. Child care programs that provide 4KCA onsite can receive Wisconsin Shares child care authorizations based on the parent's need for child care while the parent is participating in an approved activity.

- iii. Estimated percentage of the MOE Fund requirement that will be met with Prekindergarten expenditures (not to exceed 20 percent):
20%

- iv. If the percentage is more than 10 percent of the MOE requirement, describe how the state will coordinate its Prekindergarten and child care services to expand the availability of child care:

Wisconsin is a national leader in implementing 4K through the community approach. More than 95% of public-school districts statewide offer 4K education. A majority of districts offering 4K offer a 4KCA model. Districts more often select school-based 4K programs, but the 4KCA programs serve a majority of children in districts that offer them. Of those districts that offer both school-based 4K and 4KCA, the collaborative programs serve 58% of the local population.

[] f. The same funds are used to meet at least some of the CCDF MOE and TANF MOE requirements.

i. If known, what percent of funds used to meet CCDF MOE also is used to meet TANF MOE requirements?

N/A

1.6 Public-Private Partnerships

Lead Agencies are required to describe how they encourage public-private partnerships among other public agencies, tribal organizations, private entities, faith-based organizations, businesses or organizations that promote business involvement, and/or community-based organizations to leverage existing service delivery (i.e., cooperative agreement among providers to pool resources to pay for shared fixed costs and operation) (658E(c)(2)(P)). ACF expects these types of partnerships to leverage public and private resources to further the goals of the CCDBG Act. Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate how they encourage public-private partnerships to leverage existing child care and early education service-delivery systems and to increase the supply and quality of child care services for children younger than age 13, for example, by implementing voluntary shared service alliance models (98.14(a)(4)).

Amended: Effective Date 01/02/2023

1.6.1 Lead Agency public-private partnerships

Identify and describe any public-private partnerships encouraged by the Lead Agency to leverage public and private resources to further the goals of the CCDBG Act. Include in the response any public-private partnerships that have emerged from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic (98.16(d)(2)) and if applicable, how those partnerships will be continued post-pandemic.

The Lead Agency implemented a public-private partnership with the goal of leveraging a creating a sustainable, long-term process that will significantly and permanently increase the flow of funds into early childhood quality improvement. In this model, the Lead Agency provided networks of local affiliates with the resources they needed to make an impact in their communities. The local networks consist of early childhood leaders, local businesses, local chambers of commerce, and community foundations. Grants issued by the Lead Agency were used by local networks for a variety of projects such as supporting the development of a community database for developmental screening, the creation of a family-friendly business certification program where businesses pay a fee to be rated on their family-friendly policies, and formation of a countywide social service triage system for children so that families can be screened and, based on the results, connected with services that will best fit their needs. With help from the Lead Agency, these local networks will continue to tailor and customize a message on the importance of investing in early childhood and give interested businesses a way to invest locally in quality early childhood initiatives and programs. The Lead Agency has further identified a sustainable process to identify the number of available child care slots across the state through collaborative projects with Shine Early Learning, SFTA, WECA, CCR&Rs. This process was started during the COVID-19 pandemic to match available child care providers with essential workers in need of child care. These efforts will continue to be supported along with specific grants for businesses and grants for public/private partnerships. Support to the Lead Agency will be provided by a Business Advisory Committee through Community Innovation Grants.

1.7 Coordination with Child Care Resource and Referral Systems

Lead Agencies may use CCDF funds to establish or support a system or network of local or regional child care resource and referral (CCR&R) organizations that is coordinated, to the

extent determined by the state/territory, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based or regionally based, lead child care resource and referral organization (such as a statewide CCR&R network) (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii); 98.52).

If Lead Agencies use CCDF funds for local CCR&R organizations, the local or regional CCR&R organizations supported by those funds must, at the direction of the Lead Agency:

- Provide parents in the state with consumer education information concerning the full range of child care options (including faith-based and community-based child care providers), analyzed by provider, including child care provided during non-traditional hours and through emergency child care centers, in their area.
- To the extent practicable, work directly with families who receive assistance to offer the families support and assistance to make an informed decision about which child care providers they will use to ensure that the families are enrolling their children in the most appropriate child care setting that suits their needs and one that is of high quality (as determined by the Lead Agency).
- Collect data and provide information on the coordination of services and supports, including services under Part B, Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Collect data and provide information on the supply of and demand for child care services in areas of the state and submit the information to the state.
- Work to establish partnerships with public agencies and private entities, including faith-based and community-based child care providers, to increase the supply and quality of child care services in the state and, as appropriate, coordinate their activities with the activities of the state Lead Agency and local agencies that administer funds made available through CCDF (98.52(b)).

Nothing in the statute or rule prohibits states from using CCR&R agencies to conduct or provide additional services beyond those required by statute or rule.

Note: Use 1.7.1 to address if a state/territory funds a CCR&R organization, describe what services are provided and how it is structured. Use subsection 7.5 to address the services provided by the local or regional child care resource and referral agencies and the indicators of progress met by CCR&R organizations if they are funded by quality set-aside funds.

Amended: Effective Date 02/10/2023

1.7.1 Funding local or regional CCR&R organizations

Does the Lead Agency fund local or regional CCR&R organizations?

No. The state/territory does not fund a CCR&R organization(s) and has no plans to establish one.

Yes. The state/territory funds a CCR&R organization(s) with all the responsibilities outlined above. If yes, describe the following:

How are CCR&R services organized? Include how many agencies, if there is a statewide network, and if the system is coordinated:

The Lead Agency has contracted with Shine Early Learning to become the administrative agency

for the Lead Agency's YoungStar program. During a transition period with the previous vendor, Supporting Families Together Associated (SFTA), the Lead Agency will work in close collaboration with both vendors as well as the nine local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies to provide services to providers throughout the state. SFTA's contract will sunset on 4/30/23 and all YoungStar administrative services will fall under the purview of Shine Early Learning. The funding for the nine CCR&Rs will be based on the child/provider population and the geographic area served. More information can be found at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar>

1.8 Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan

In past disasters, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the provision of emergency child care services and rebuilding and restoring of child care infrastructure has emerged as an essential service. Lead Agencies are required to establish a Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan (658E(c)(2)(U)). They must demonstrate how they will address the needs of children—including the need for safe child care before, during, and after a state of emergency declared by the Governor, or a major disaster or emergency (as defined by Section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5122)—through a Statewide Disaster Plan. The effective date for the establishment of this Statewide Disaster Plan was October 1, 2018.

1.8.1 Statewide disaster plan updates

Did you make any updates to the Statewide Disaster Plan since the FY 2019-2021 CCDF Plan was submitted? Please consider any updates that were made as a result of the Lead Agency's experiences in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Note: It is a Lead Agency decision on how often a plan should be updated and which entities, if any, should be collaborated with in the updating process.)

No

Yes. If yes, describe the elements of the plan that were updated:

N/A

1.8.2 Statewide disaster plan continued compliance

To demonstrate continued compliance with the required elements in the Statewide Disaster Plan, certify by checking the required elements included in the current State Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan.

a. The plan was developed in collaboration with the following required entities:

i. State human services agency

ii. State emergency management agency

iii. State licensing agency

iv. State health department or public health department

v. Local and state child care resource and referral agencies

- vi. State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body
- b. The plan includes guidelines for the continuation of child care subsidies.
- c. The plan includes guidelines for the continuation of child care services.
- d. The plan includes procedures for the coordination of post-disaster recovery of child care services.
- e. The plan contains requirements for all CCDF providers (both licensed and license-exempt) to have in place:
 - i. Procedures for evacuation
 - ii. Procedures for relocation
 - iii. Procedures for shelter-in-place
 - iv. Procedures for communication and reunification with families
 - v. Procedures for continuity of operations
 - vi. Procedures for accommodations of infants and toddlers
 - vii. Procedures for accommodations of children with disabilities
 - viii. Procedures for accommodations of children with chronic medical conditions
- f. The plan contains procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training.
- g. The plan contains procedures for staff and volunteer practice drills.

1.8.3 Website link to statewide child care disaster plan

If available, provide the direct URL/website link to the website where the statewide child care disaster plan is posted:

[https://dma.wi.gov/DMA/divisions/wem/preparedness/2017_WERP\(Full37M\).pdf](https://dma.wi.gov/DMA/divisions/wem/preparedness/2017_WERP(Full37M).pdf)
[https://dma.wi.gov/DMA/divisions/wem/preparedness/2017_WERP\(Full37M\).pdf](https://dma.wi.gov/DMA/divisions/wem/preparedness/2017_WERP(Full37M).pdf)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/emergencyprep> <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/emergencyprep>

2 Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education

Lead Agencies are required to support the role of parents as child care consumers who need information to make informed choices regarding the services that best suit their needs. A key purpose of the CCDBG Act is to “promote involvement by parents and family members in the development of their children in child care settings” (658A(b)). Lead Agencies have the opportunity to consider how information can be provided to parents through the child care assistance system, partner agencies, and child care consumer education websites.

The target audience for the consumer education information includes three groups: parents receiving CCDF assistance, the general public, and when appropriate, child care providers. OCC

expects that Lead Agencies are using targeted strategies for each group to ensure tailored consumer education information. In this section, Lead Agencies will address how information is made available to families, the general public and child care providers to assist them in accessing high-quality child care and how information is shared on other financial assistance programs or supports for which a family might be eligible. In addition, Lead Agencies will certify that information on developmental screenings is provided and will describe how research and best practices concerning children’s development, including their social-emotional development, is shared.

This section also covers the parental complaint process and the consumer education website that has been developed by the Lead Agency. Finally, this section addresses the consumer statement that is provided to parents supported with CCDF funds.

Note: When asked for citations, responses can include state statute, regulations, administrative rules, policy manuals, or policy issuances. See the Introduction on page 4 for more detail.

2.1 Outreach for Limited English Proficiency and Persons with Disabilities

The Lead Agency is required to describe how it provides outreach and services to eligible families with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities and to facilitate the participation of child care providers with limited English proficiency and child care providers with disabilities in the CCDF program (98.16(dd)). Lead Agencies are required to develop policies and procedures to clearly communicate program information, such as requirements, consumer education information, and eligibility information, to families and child care providers of all backgrounds (81 FR 67456).

2.1.1 Strategies to provide outreach and services to eligible families

Check the strategies the Lead Agency or partners utilize to provide outreach and services to eligible families for whom English is not their first language. Check all that apply.

a. Application in other languages (application document, brochures, provider notices)

b. Informational materials in non-English languages

c. Website in non-English languages

d. Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations

e. Bilingual caseworkers or translators available

f. Bilingual outreach workers

g. Partnerships with community-based organizations

h. Collaboration with Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Head Start

i. Home visiting programs

j. Other. Describe:

The Lead Agency has identified potentially eligible families through coordination with local county/tribal human services agencies, Family Resource Centers (FRCs), CCR&R agencies, migrant worker service providers and through local TANF agencies. This outreach will be expanded to include homeless service programs, domestic abuse service programs, and housing programs. Spanish and

Hmong are the predominant languages in addition to English. The Lead Agency has the ability to provide interpretation and translations for all languages. The Lead Agency provides training and technical assistance in other languages.

2.1.2 Strategies to provide outreach and services to disabled family members

Check the strategies the Lead Agency or partners utilize to provide outreach and services to eligible families with a person(s) with a disability. Check all that apply.

- a. Applications and public informational materials available in Braille and other communication formats for access by individuals with disabilities
- b. Websites that are accessible (e.g., Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act)
- c. Caseworkers with specialized training/experience in working with individuals with disabilities
- d. Ensuring accessibility of environments and activities for all children
- e. Partnerships with state and local programs and associations focused on disability-related topics and issues
- f. Partnerships with parent associations, support groups, and parent-to-parent support groups, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) federally funded Parent Training and Information Centers
- g. Partnerships with state and local IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C providers and agencies
- h. Availability and/or access to specialized services (e.g., mental health, behavioral specialists, therapists) to address the needs of all children
- i. Other. Describe:

To promote access to person(s) with disabilities, the YoungStar website was made accessible for people using screen readers by using meta and alt tags or descriptions. These tags can play a crucial role in how people interpret a webpage and help to give written information for images found on pages. The Wisconsin Shares subsidy program provides added financial support to families seeking high quality child care for children with a disability. A family that receives Wisconsin Shares may be eligible to receive a higher subsidy amount to assist the child care provider with any additional costs (e.g., specialized training, individualized services, etc.) to care for children with disabilities who may require a higher level of care within the child care setting.

2.2 Parental Complaint Process

The Lead Agency must certify that the state/territory maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request (658E(c)(2)(C); 98.15(b)(3)). Lead Agencies must also provide a detailed description of the hotline or similar reporting process for parents to submit complaints about child care providers; the process for substantiating complaints; the manner in which the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints; and ways that the Lead Agency makes information on such parental complaints available to the public on request (98.16 (s); 98.32(d)).

2.2.1 Reporting process for submitting complaints

Describe the Lead Agency's hotline or similar reporting process through which parents can submit complaints about child care providers, including a link if it is a Web-based process:

The Lead Agency's [File a Complaint](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/complaint) webpage links parents to both a [General Complaint Form](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/contact/submit_a_complaint) to submit online and a [File a Child Care Complaint](https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/complaint) webpage that describes the complaint submission process. Child care provider complaints can be submitted over the telephone, by email, or in writing to the Regional Licensing Office or certification agency that serves the center.

2.2.2 Process and timeline for screening, substantiating, and responding to complaints

For complaints regarding all providers, including CCDF providers and non-CCDF providers, describe the Lead Agency's process and timeline for screening, substantiating, and responding to complaints. Describe whether the process includes monitoring, and highlight any differences in processes for CCDF and non-CCDF providers and licensed and license-exempt providers:

The Lead Agency investigates all complaints it receives regarding licensed programs, license-exempt school-based programs, and license-exempt family child care programs in Milwaukee county, including those from parents, other family members, neighbors, child care center staff, social service and law enforcement personnel, other community members, and anonymous sources. The staff person who receives a complaint gathers sufficient information from the complainant to assess how soon the investigation must be initiated. When immediate attention is needed because of potential imminent danger to the health, safety, and welfare of children in care, the regional office must respond no later than the next day after the complaint is received. When the allegation does not pose a risk of imminent danger to children in care, an onsite investigation must begin within ten working days from intake of the complaint. Investigations include a visit to the program to observe conditions and check center records, and interviews with the licensed or license-exempt operator and current or former staff members, if needed. Following completion of the complaint investigation, the licensing specialist determines that the complaint is substantiated or unsubstantiated. Rule violations are issued if appropriate. All investigative findings must be documented and closed out within 20 working days from completion of the investigation. The licensee is notified of the results of the complaint investigation either at the onsite exit interview or by phone. If requested, the results of the complaint may be shared with the complainant. If a complaint is substantiated, a verification visit is conducted to ensure that all violations have been corrected. In license-exempt family child care outside of Milwaukee County, local counties, tribes, or subcontracted agencies investigate complaints they receive regarding license-exempt (certified) child care providers. For complaints against tribal child care providers the applicable tribal agency should be notified as quickly as possible to ensure the involvement of tribal Human Services staff in the investigative process if necessary. The procedures/process is similar to that of licensing. The staff person who receives a complaint gathers sufficient information from the complainant to assess how soon the investigation must be initiated. When immediate attention is needed because of potential imminent danger to the health, safety, and welfare of children in care, the certification agency must respond no later than the next day after the complaint is received. When the allegation does not pose a risk of imminent danger to children in care, an onsite investigation must begin within ten working days from intake of the complaint. Following completion of the complaint investigation, the certification worker determines that the complaint is substantiated or unsubstantiated. Rule violations are issued if appropriate. All investigative findings must be documented in the Lead Agency's Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS).

2.2.3 Maintaining records of substantiated parental complaints

Certify by describing how the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints. Highlight any differences in processes for CCDF and non-CCDF providers and licensed and license-exempt providers:

The Lead Agency and local certification agencies maintain records of all substantiated and unsubstantiated parental complaints in the WISCCRS database for the duration a provider is actively licensed and six years after the provider closes. This allows for an ongoing record of investigations and findings.

2.2.4 Making information about substantiated parental complaints available to the public

Certify by describing how the Lead Agency makes information about substantiated parental complaints available to the public; this information can include the consumer education website discussed in section 2.3:

The Lead Agency and local certification agencies ensure that violations are posted on the (<https://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/>) Child Care Finder public search website allowing parents to consider substantiated complaints when selecting and evaluating child care programs. Additionally, full records are available via open records requests to the Lead Agency or local certification agency.

2.2.5 Citations related to parental complaints

Provide the citation to the Lead Agency's policy and process related to parental complaints:

Licensed group and license-exempt CCDF programs: Wis. Statutes, s.48.74 and Wis. Administrative Code DCF 251.12(1); Licensed Family: DCF 250.12(1); License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.07.

2.3 Consumer Education Website

States and territories are required to provide information to parents, the general public, and when applicable, child care providers through a state website, which is consumer-friendly and easily accessible (658E(c)(2)(E)(i)(III) and 98.33 (a)). The website must include information to assist families in understanding the Lead Agency's policies and procedures, including licensing child care providers. The website information must also include monitoring and inspection reports for each provider, and the quality of each provider (if such information is available for the provider) (658E(c)(2)(D); 98.33(a)). The website should also provide access to a yearly statewide report on the aggregate number of deaths, serious injuries, and the number of cases of substantiated child abuse that have occurred in child care settings. To help families access additional information on finding child care, the website must include contact information for local child care and resource referral organizations. It must also include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency and other organizations to better understand the information on the website.

To certify, respond to questions 2.3.1 through 2.3.10 by describing how the Lead Agency meets these requirements and provide the direct URL/website link to the consumer education website in 2.3.11.

Please note that any changes made to the web links provided below in this section after the CCDF Plan is approved will require a CCDF Plan amendment.

2.3.1 Consumer-Friendly and easily accessible website

Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that its website is consumer-friendly and easily accessible. (Note: While there is no Federal CCDF definition for easily accessible, Lead Agencies may consider easily accessible websites to be searchable, simple to navigate, written in plain language, and easy to understand.):

The Lead Agency's Child Care Finder website includes child care regulation and YoungStar quality rating information. The site is mobile friendly and includes up-to-date information on YoungStar participation and regulatory monitoring results. The site provides multiple ways of searching for providers, including by name, location (within desired number of miles to an address), type of child care, and YoungStar rating. Several sections of the website were designed through a partnership between the Lead Agency and a marketing firm that specializes in working with families in low-income areas. The Lead Agency is also developing a Tribal Child Care resource page to connect families to individual tribal websites that outlines resources and the tribe's CCDF Plan.

2.3.2 Website access for families whose primary language is not English

Describe how the website ensures the widest possible access to services for families that speak languages other than English (98.33(a)):

The (<https://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/>) Child Care Finder website provides families who speak Spanish and Hmong contact information for individual staff members (e.g., email addresses, phone numbers) that can assist and support the family member in their native language. The Lead Agency strives to provide materials and publications in multiple languages to meet the needs of families that it serves. Most publications are provided in English and Spanish. The following is an example of a translated YoungStar brochure: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5026s.pdf>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5026s.pdf>.

2.3.3 Website access for persons with disabilities

Describe how the website ensures the widest possible access to services for persons with disabilities:

The Lead Agency's website was developed using current techniques and meets the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 508 electronics and information technology accessibility standards. (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/usepolicy#accessibility>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/usepolicy#accessibility>. Images on the website use Meta tags to allow screen readers to assist individuals with disabilities. The Lead Agency has created the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>) Early Childhood Inclusion webpage to help families and providers learn more about laws and policies supporting the inclusion of children with disabilities. The page also provides information about best practices and training opportunities, and addresses common concerns a family may have about placing their child with a disability into a child care setting. To assist parents and providers in understanding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Lead Agency has created a (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/understanding-ada>) Tip Sheet and webpage specifically addressing how ADA affects access to child care for families with children with disabilities.

2.3.4 Child care policies and procedures

Provide the specific website links to the descriptions of the Lead Agency's processes related to child care. A required component of the consumer education website is a description of Lead Agency policies and procedures relating to child care (98.33(a)(1)). This information includes a description of how the state/territory licenses child care, a rationale for exempting providers from licensing requirements, the procedure for conducting monitoring and

inspections of providers, and the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks.

a. Provide the direct URL/website link to how the Lead Agency licenses child care providers, including the rationale for exempting certain providers from licensing requirements, as described in subsection 5.2:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation>

b. Provide the direct URL/website link to the processes for conducting monitoring and inspections of child care providers, as described in subsection 5.4:

**(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5279.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5279.pdf>**

c. Provide the direct URL/website link to the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks for staff members of child care providers, as described in 5.5.2.

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/cbc>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/cbc>

d. Provide the direct URL/website link to the offenses that prevent individuals from being employed by a child care provider or receiving CCDF funds, as described in questions 5.5.4:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/cbc>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/cbc>

2.3.5 Searchable list of providers

How does the Lead Agency post a localized list of providers searchable by zip code on its website?

The consumer education website must include a list of all licensed providers (98.33 (a)(2)). At the discretion of the Lead Agency, all providers eligible to deliver CCDF services, identified as either licensed or license-exempt, can be included. Providers caring for children to whom they are related do not need to be included. The list of providers must be searchable by ZIP Code.

a. Provide the website link to the list of child care providers searchable by ZIP code:

**(<https://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/Search.aspx>)
<https://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/Search.aspx>; or**

**(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cccertification/ccc-directories>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cccertification/ccc-directories>; or**

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/lcc-directories>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/lcc-directories>

b. In addition to the licensed providers that are required to be included in your searchable list, are there additional providers included in the Lead Agency's searchable list of child care providers (please check all that apply)?

i. License-exempt center-based CCDF providers

ii. License-exempt family child care (FCC) CCDF providers

iii. License-exempt non-CCDF providers

iv. Relative CCDF child care providers

v. Other. Describe:

N/A

c. Identify what informational elements, if any, are available in the searchable results. Note: Quality information (if available) and monitoring results are required on the website but are not required to be a part of the search results. Check the box when information is provided.

Provider Information Available in Searchable Results

All Licensed Providers

- Contact Information
- Enrollment capacity
- Hours, days and months of operation
- Provider education and training
- Languages spoken by the caregiver
- Quality information
- Monitoring reports
- Willingness to accept CCDF certificates
- Ages of children served

License-Exempt CCDF Center-based Providers

- Contact Information
- Enrollment capacity
- Hours, days and months of operation
- Provider education and training
- Languages spoken by the caregiver
- Quality information
- Monitoring reports
- Willingness to accept CCDF certificates
- Ages of children served

License-Exempt CCDF Family Child Care Home Providers

- Contact Information
- Enrollment capacity
- Hours, days and months of operation
- Provider education and training
- Languages spoken by the caregiver
- Quality information
- Monitoring reports

Willingness to accept CCDF certificates

Ages of children served

License-Exempt Non-CCDF Providers

Contact Information

Enrollment capacity

Hours, days and months of operation

Provider education and training

Languages spoken by the caregiver

Quality information

Monitoring reports

Willingness to accept CCDF certificates

Ages of children served

Relative CCDF Providers

Contact Information

Enrollment capacity

Hours, days and months of operation

Provider education and training

Languages spoken by the caregiver

Quality information

Monitoring reports

Willingness to accept CCDF certificates

Ages of children served

d. Other information included for:

i. All Licensed providers.

The search results page includes: a brief description of the YoungStar program, definitions of regulated child care types, contacts for Spanish and Hmong translations, and a map and list of providers that match the search criteria. The list includes: the type of regulated care (e.g., licensed group), name of provider, YoungStar quality rating, provider address, and distance from the location specified in the search criteria. Parents can click on a provider name and access additional details for all regulated providers, including ages served, hours and months open, enrollment capacity, contact information, regulation monitoring reports and, if applicable, accreditation information. For providers who choose to receive a YoungStar Technical Rating, parents can also see provider education and training and YoungStar rating by category.

ii. License-exempt CCDF center-based providers.

The search results page includes: a brief description of the YoungStar program, definitions of regulated child care types, contacts for Spanish and Hmong translations, and a map and list of providers that match the search criteria. The list includes: the type of regulated care, name of provider, YoungStar quality rating, provider address, and distance from the location specified in the

search criteria. Parents can click on a provider name and access additional details for all regulated providers, including ages served, hours and months open, enrollment capacity, contact information, regulation monitoring reports and, if applicable, accreditation information. For providers who choose to receive a YoungStar Technical Rating, parents can also see provider education and training and YoungStar rating by category.

iii. License-exempt CCDF family child care providers.

The search results page includes: a brief description of the YoungStar program, definitions of regulated child care types, contacts for Spanish and Hmong translations, and a map and list of providers that match the search criteria. The list includes: the type of regulated care (e.g., certified family), name of provider, YoungStar quality rating, provider address, and distance from the location specified in the search criteria. Parents can click on a provider name and access additional details for all regulated providers, including ages served, hours and months open, enrollment capacity, contact information, regulation monitoring reports and, if applicable, accreditation information. For providers who choose to receive a YoungStar Technical Rating, parents can also see provider education and training and YoungStar rating by category.

iv. License-exempt, non-CCDF providers.

The search results page includes a brief description of the YoungStar program, definitions of regulated child care types, contacts for Spanish and Hmong translations, and a map and list of providers that match the search criteria. The list includes the type of regulated care (e.g., certified family), name of provider, YoungStar rating (not participating), provider address, and distance from the location specified in the search criteria. Parents can click on a provider name and access additional details for all regulated providers, including ages served, hours and months open, enrollment capacity, contact information, and regulation monitoring reports.

v. Relative CCDF providers.

N/A

2.3.6 Provider-specific quality information

Lead Agencies must also identify specific quality information on each child care provider for whom they have this information. The type of information provided is determined by the Lead Agency, and it should help families easily understand whether a provider offers services that meet Lead Agency-specific best practices and standards or a nationally recognized, research-based set of criteria. Provider-specific quality information must only be posted on the consumer website if it is available for the individual provider.

a. What information does the Lead Agency provide on the website to determine quality ratings or other quality information?

i. Quality rating and improvement system

ii. National accreditation

iii. Enhanced licensing system

iv. Meeting Head Start/Early Head Start Program Performance Standards

v. Meeting Prekindergarten quality requirements

vi. School-age standards, where applicable

vii. Other. Describe:

N/A

b. For what types of providers are quality ratings or other indicators of quality available?

i. Licensed CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

YoungStar is the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for Wisconsin. YoungStar participation is required for all providers accepting Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments. In Wisconsin, the child care subsidy program is Wisconsin Shares. For all other providers, participation in YoungStar is voluntary. Providers electing not to participate in YoungStar have only regulation detail on the website. Parents can view rating details by clicking on an embedded link that provides specific information about the various quality components of rated programs.

ii. Licensed non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

YoungStar is the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for Wisconsin. YoungStar participation is required for all providers accepting Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments. In Wisconsin, the child care subsidy program is Wisconsin Shares. For all other providers, participation in YoungStar is voluntary. Providers electing not to participate in YoungStar have only regulation detail on the website. Parents can view rating details by clicking on an embedded link that provides specific information about the various quality components of rated programs.

iii. License-exempt center-based CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

YoungStar is the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for Wisconsin. YoungStar participation is required for all providers accepting Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments. In Wisconsin, the child care subsidy program is Wisconsin Shares. For all other providers, participation in YoungStar is voluntary. Providers electing not to participate in YoungStar have only regulation detail on the website. Parents can view rating details by clicking on an embedded link that provides specific information about the various quality components of rated programs.

iv. License-exempt FCC CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

YoungStar is the quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) for Wisconsin. YoungStar participation is required for all providers accepting Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments. In Wisconsin, the child care subsidy program is Wisconsin Shares. For all other providers, participation in YoungStar is voluntary. Providers electing not to participate in YoungStar have only regulation detail on the website. Parents can view rating details by clicking on an embedded link that provides specific information about the various quality components of rated programs.

v. License-exempt non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:

N/A

vii. Relative child care providers. Describe the quality information:

N/A

viii. Other. Describe:

N/A

2.3.7 Monitoring and inspection reports on consumer education website

Lead Agencies must post monitoring and inspection reports on the consumer education website for each licensed provider and for each non-relative provider eligible to provide CCDF services. These reports must include the results of required annual monitoring visits, and visits due to major substantiated complaints about a provider's failure to comply with health and safety requirements and child care policies. A full report covers everything in the monitoring visit, including areas of compliance and non-compliance. If the state does not produce any reports that include areas of compliance, the website must include information about all areas covered by a monitoring visit (e.g., by posting a blank checklist used by monitors).

The reports must be in plain language or provide a plain language summary, as defined by the state or territory, and be timely to ensure that the results of the reports are available and easily understood by parents when they are deciding on a child care provider. Lead Agencies must

post at least 3 years of reports.

Certify by responding to the questions below:

a. Does the Lead Agency post? (check one):

i. Full monitoring reports that include areas of compliance and non-compliance.

ii. Monitoring reports that include areas of non-compliance only, with information about all areas covered by a monitoring visit posted separately on the website (e.g., a blank checklist used by monitors). Note: This option is only allowable if the state/territory does not produce monitoring reports that include both areas of compliance and non-compliance. If checked, provide a direct URL/website link to the website where a blank checklist is posted.

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0063.pdf>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0063.pdf>,

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0069.pdf>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0069.pdf>,

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0070.pdf>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0070.pdf>

b. Check to certify that the monitoring and inspection reports and, if necessary, their plain language summaries include:

Date of inspection

Health and safety violations, including those violations that resulted in fatalities or serious injuries occurring at the provider. Describe how these health and safety violations are prominently displayed:

The Lead Agency provides on the Child Care Finder website plain-language summaries for all regulated providers. Results provided include: the dates of monitoring visits, results of monitoring visits, number of violations in the last three years and, if submitted, the actions in place to correct identified violations.

Corrective action plans taken by the state and/or child care provider. Describe:

Licensed child care providers are required to submit a correction plan for each violation cited on the noncompliance statement and must include a date by which the correction will be made. Correction plans and dates for completion are reviewed by licensing staff for acceptability and are posted on the Child Care Finder website one day after approval.

Licensing specialists verify that the corrections have been made at the next monitoring visit. Enforcement actions, stipulations, and warning letters - sanctions or penalties that the Lead Agency imposes to gain a licensed child care center's compliance with administrative rule - are also listed on the Child Care Finder website next to summaries of the rules violated.

A minimum of 3 years of results, where available.

c. How and where are reports posted in a timely manner? Specifically, provide the Lead Agency's definition of "timely" and describe how it ensures that reports and/or summaries are posted within its timeframe. Note: While Lead Agencies may define "timely," we recommend Lead Agencies update results as soon as possible and no later than 90 days after

an inspection or corrective action is taken.

- i. Provide the direct URL/website link to where the reports are posted.

Reports are posted to individual child care program records found on the (<https://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/Search/Search.aspx>) Child Care Finder webpage. Users can access this webpage to view specific program compliance history.

- ii. Describe how the Lead Agency defines timely posting of monitoring reports.

Monitoring results are posted to the Child Care Finder webpage the day after the noncompliance or compliance statement issue date has been entered into the monitoring database (WISCCRS).

d. Monitoring and inspection reports or the summaries must be in plain language to meet the CCDF regulatory requirements (98.33 (a)(4)).

- i. Provide the Lead Agency's definition of plain language.

The following instructions for describing violations in plain language are included in the Licensing Procedure Manual chapter titled Noncompliance Statement and Correction Plan and Compliance Statement: "Directly below each rule summary statement, the licensing specialist succinctly describes the administrative rule violation. The description should, as much as possible and appropriate, contain information on who, what, when, where and how the rule is being or was violated. The time of day of the monitoring visit is included if it is relevant to the violation. When documenting the violation, the licensing specialist should use the following sentence structure: On , . If all violations cited on the CFS-294 occurred on the same date and time of day, it is not necessary to repeat the date and time of day in describing each violation. If all violations cited on the complaint form occurred on the same date and time of day, it is not necessary to repeat the date and time of day in describing each violation. Write in concise, plain English. Any reader, including parents and the public who do not have knowledge of child care administrative rule, should be able to understand the description. Jargon and unclear and unnecessary words should be eliminated. Only use acronyms that are nationally recognized such as CPR/AED. CPS and DCF are examples of acronyms that are not nationally recognized and should be avoided. Be objective, factual, and descriptive. The description should not include derogatory comments or subjective observations, such as 'The licensee showed a lack of good judgment.' Guesses at the licensee's motivations, or the licensing specialist's personal biases, opinions and feelings about the violation should not be included. Enough detail should be provided to support the decision to cite each violation but should not include irrelevant information. When the complaint form is generated by WISCCRS, 'Repeat Violation' will be automatically designated."

- ii. Describe how the monitoring and inspection reports or the summaries are in plain language.

The following instructions for describing violations in plain language are included in the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/manuals/cclicensing-manual/>) Licensing Procedure Manual chapter titled Noncompliance Statement and Correction Plan and Compliance Statement: "Directly below each rule summary statement, the licensing specialist succinctly describes the administrative rule violation. The description should, as much as possible and appropriate, contain information on who, what, when, where and how the rule is being or was violated. The time of day of the monitoring visit is included if it is relevant to the violation. When documenting the violation, the licensing specialist should use the following sentence structure: On , . If all violations cited on the CFS-294 occurred on the

same date and time of day, it is not necessary to repeat the date and time of day in describing each violation. If all violations cited on the complaint form occurred on the same date and time of day, it is not necessary to repeat the date and time of day in describing each violation. Write in concise, plain English. Any reader, including parents and the public who do not have knowledge of child care administrative rule, should be able to understand the description. Jargon and unclear and unnecessary words should be eliminated. Only use acronyms that are nationally recognized such as CPR/AED. CPS and DCF are examples of acronyms that are not nationally recognized and should be avoided. Be objective, factual, and descriptive. The description should not include derogatory comments or subjective observations, such as 'The licensee showed a lack of good judgment.' Guesses at the licensee's motivations, or the licensing specialist's personal biases, opinions and feelings about the violation should not be included. Enough detail should be provided to support the decision to cite each violation but should not include irrelevant information. When the complaint form is generated by WISCCRS, 'Repeat Violation' will be automatically designated."

e. Describe the process for correcting inaccuracies in reports (98.33 (a)(4)).

The process for correcting inaccuracies in reports is the same for licensed and CCDF license-exempt school-based programs. Before leaving the center on the day the violations are documented, the licensing specialist conducts an exit interview to inform the provider of the probable violations that will be cited. At the exit interview, the licensing specialist informs the provider of what was observed at the visit and documented on the Noncompliance Statement, and what will be expected of the provider to address the violations and bring the center into compliance. This affords the provider and the regulatory specialist an opportunity to discuss the violations and correct any inaccuracies before the report is finalized. When inaccuracies in reports are identified after the exit interview, they are brought to the attention of the licensing specialist and the supervisor who reviews the report. Inaccuracies are corrected and a copy of the corrected report is given to the provider and posted on the Child Care Finder website. All changes made to a Noncompliance Statement will appear on the Child Care Finder website one day after the change is entered in WISCCRS, the child care database. License-exempt family child care is administered by local counties, tribes, and subcontracted agencies. These agencies have discretion regarding exit interviews and the process for correcting inaccuracies in compliance reports. The Lead Agency's policy guidance to certification agencies states, "there is no appeal process for issuance of Noncompliance Statements. If an operator wants to dispute a noncompliance statement, s/he should contact the certifier's supervisor in his/her county/tribe." The automation process for correcting the error in WISCCRS and on the Child Care Finder website is the same as described above for licensed and license-exempt programs.

f. Describe the process for providers to appeal the findings in reports. Description of the process should include the time requirements and timeframes for:

- filing the appeal
- conducting the investigation
- removal of any violations from the website determined on appeal to be unfounded.

From the Lead-Agency's : The CFS-294 noncompliance form is not a sanction or penalty taken pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 48.715 and the licensee is not entitled to appeal this action. Licensees may, however, contest a certain violation or express general displeasure about being issued a CFS-294.

The licensing specialist should listen to and consider the licensee's opinion with an open mind. It is possible that the licensee will provide evidence or documentation that will result in the licensing specialist rescinding a violation. Sometimes it may be necessary for the licensing specialist to refer a licensee to the licensing manager/supervisor for resolution and on very rare occasions, the licensing manager/supervisor may decide to rescind a violation after consulting with the licensing specialist. If the CFS-294 noncompliance is rescinded, the licensing specialist should inform the licensee of this decision, either by email or telephone.

Should the licensing specialist rescind all violations on the CFS-294, s/he should issue a CFS-785 (compliance statement) to the licensee with an accompanying letter indicating that the previously issued CFS-294 should be destroyed and the newly issued CFS-785 posted.

If all violations are not rescinded and some violations remain, the licensing specialist issues a revised CFS-294 and at the licensing specialist's discretion, a new instruction sheet may accompany the revised CFS-294. The due date on the original correction plan remains in effect for any violations that have not been rescinded. If the CFS-294 has been recorded in WISCCRS and is subsequently changed, the licensing specialist deletes the violations from WISCCRS.

g. Describe the process for maintaining monitoring and inspection reports on the website. Specifically, provide the minimum number of years reports are posted and the policy for removing reports (98.33(a)(4)(iv)).

Licensed, license-exempt family, and license-exempt public-school violations are displayed on the Child Care Public Search the day after they are entered into WISCCRS. The violations remain on the public website for three years. After three years have passed from the date of the citation, the violations are automatically removed from the website.

2.3.8 Aggregate data on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated abuse

Aggregate data on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of child abuse that have occurred in child care settings each year must be posted by Lead Agencies on the consumer education website (98.33(a)(5)). The serious incident aggregate data should include information about any child in the care of a provider eligible to receive CCDF, not just children receiving subsidies.

This aggregate information on serious injuries and deaths must be separated by category of care (e.g. centers, family child care homes, and in-home care) and licensing status (i.e. licensed or license-exempt) for all eligible CCDF providers in the state. The information on instances of substantiated child abuse does not have to be organized by category of care or licensing status. Information should also include the total number of children regulated to be cared for by provider type and licensing status (81 FR, p. 67477), so that families can view the serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of abuse data in context. The aggregate report should not include individual provider-specific information or names.

a. Certify by providing:

- i. The designated entity to which child care providers must submit reports of any serious injuries or deaths of children occurring in child care (98.16 (ff)) and describe how the Lead Agency obtains the aggregate data from the entity.

Wisconsin Administrative Code DCF 202 Child Care Certification, DCF 250 Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Centers, DCF 251 Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers, and DCF 252 Licensing Rules for Day Camps require providers to report a death, incident, or accident of a child in care to the local certification agency or the Lead Agency, either through verbal or written notification, within 24 hours of seeking a medical evaluation for the child or becoming aware that a medical evaluation was sought by others. Fax, email, letter, and in person are acceptable ways of notifying the certification agency or Lead Agency within 24 hours. However, in all instances, a licensed child care program/provider must submit a written report to the appropriate Lead Agency regional office within five business days of the incident, accident, or death. When submitting the written notification, the provider may use either the Lead Agency's form, Incident Report - Child Care Centers, or their own form to report incidents, accidents, and deaths.

- ii. The definition of “substantiated child abuse” used by the Lead Agency for this requirement.

Substantiated child abuse is defined by Wis. Statutes, Chapter 48 Children's Code as abuse or neglect or threatened abuse or neglect that under the guidelines developed by the Lead Agency under par. (b) constitutes severe abuse or neglect or a threat of severe abuse or neglect and a significant threat to the safety of a child and his or her family.
([http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/48.981\(3m\)\(a\)](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/48.981(3m)(a)))
([http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/48.981\(3m\)\(a\)](http://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/48.981(3m)(a)))

- iii. The definition of “serious injury” used by the Lead Agency for this requirement.

Effective January 1, 2020 A serious injury is defined as: Death or substantial risk of death, A broken or fractured bone, A concussion, Any other injury that requires medical treatment from a physician, dentist, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, physician assistant, or emergency medical technician.

b. Certify by checking below that the required elements are included in the Aggregate Data Report on serious incident data that have occurred in child care settings each year.

i. the total number of serious injuries of children in care by provider category/licensing status

ii. the total number of deaths of children in care by provider category/licensing status

iii. the total number of substantiated instances of child abuse in child care settings

iv. the total number of children in care by provider category/licensing status

c. Provide the website link to the page where the aggregate number of serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated instances of child abuse are posted.

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/index.php/ccregulation/reports>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/index.php/ccregulation/reports>

The consumer education website must include contact information on referrals to local child care resource and referral organizations (98.33 (a)(6)). How does the Lead Agency provide referrals to local CCR&R agencies through the consumer education website? Describe and include a website link to this information:

Parents are directed to contact their local CCR&R for information about child care providers and quality care. A (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice>) map is provided to allow parents to locate the CCR&R in their region. The Lead Agency's (<https://childcarefinder.wisconsin.gov/>) Child Care Finder website has the following statement: "Contact your Child Care Resource & Referral Center for more help finding child care." Additionally, the lead agency is developing a Tribal Child Care resource page that will include weblinks to each individual tribe so families can view additional child care resources that may be available through the tribe.

2.3.10 Lead Agency contact information on consumer education website

The consumer education website must include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency, or its designee, or other programs that can help the parent understand information included on the website (98.33 (a)(7)). Describe and include a website link to this information:

A "Contact Us" section is included at the bottom of each webpage. The parent can contact the Lead Agency or local agencies by telephone or email. A (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cclicensing/contacts>) map of local agencies is provided to direct parents to the appropriate office.

2.3.11 *Consumer education website link*

Provide the website link to the Lead Agency's consumer education website. Note: An amendment is required if this website changes.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/consumerstatement>

2.4 Additional Consumer and Provider Education Information of provider choices for parents

Lead Agencies are required to certify that they will collect and disseminate information about the full diversity of child care services to promote parental choice to parents of eligible children, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers. In addition to the consumer education website, the consumer education information can be provided through CCR&R organizations or through direct conversations with eligibility case workers and child care providers. Outreach and counseling can also be effectively provided via information sessions or intake processes for families (658E(c)(2)(E); 98.15(b)(4); 98.33(b)).

In questions 2.4.1 through 2.4.5, certify by describing:

2.4.1 Information about child care and other services available for parents

How the Lead Agency shares information with eligible parents, the general public, and where

applicable, child care providers about the availability of child care services provided through CCDF and other programs for which the family may be eligible, such as state Prekindergarten, as well as the availability of financial assistance to obtain child care services. At a minimum, describe what is provided (e.g., such methods as written materials, the website, and direct communications) and how information is tailored for these audiences.

Tribal and county agencies that administer the Wisconsin Shares program have brochures and fact sheets readily available to parents and the general public to support increased understanding of Wisconsin Shares Eligibility Guidelines and the importance of choosing high quality child care, including the brochure (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/5028.pdf>) How to read the stars: Understanding YoungStar child care quality ratings. Parents, providers and the general public are able to receive written information on the Wisconsin Shares program through CCR&R agencies and FRCs as well as at the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares>) Wisconsin Shares website. Financial information about the program can be obtained at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/parents>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/wishares/parents>. Information about available child care can be accessed at CCR&R agencies and FRCs as well as the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar>) YoungStar website. The Lead Agency utilizes multiple listservs and a bi-weekly child care listserv to inform providers about the childcare subsidy program and other topics. Information is available in Spanish and Hmong to ensure materials are available for families whose first language is not English. Information about other resources available for parents including 4-year-old kindergarten, Head Start, and Early Head Start can be found at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents/faqs>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents/faqs>. The Lead Agency also utilizes multiple social media platforms to disseminate Wisconsin Shares information to parents, the general public, and providers. Examples of these social media platforms include Facebook and Twitter. Lastly, the Lead Agency is exploring permanent online and virtual options to ensure all families have access to this critical information during situations when access to Human Services agencies is prohibited due to emergency situations.

2.4.2 Required information provided to general public, and eligible parents

How does the Lead Agency provide the required information about the following programs and benefits to the parents of eligible children, the general public, and where applicable, providers? Certify by describing for each program listed below, at a minimum, what information is provided, how the information is provided, and how the information is tailored to a variety of audiences. Include any partners who assist in providing this information.

a. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program:

Local human services agency staff and economic support workers provide information on TANF to CCDF families who may also qualify for assistance through TANF. The Ready4K text messaging program has been contracted by the Lead Agency to provide free text messaging information and curriculum to subscribed parents statewide. Information about this program has been provided via text message. Additionally, the Lead Agency partners with tribal agencies to ensure access to resources, programs, and services available through each individual tribe.

b. Head Start and Early Head Start programs:

The local agency worker shares information with parents on available Head Start programming. Additionally, the state Head Start Collaboration Office disseminates information to Head Start and Early Head Start programs related to Wisconsin Shares.

[x] c. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):

The Lead Agency contracts with CCR&R agencies for a variety of services in the area of child care. Many of these organizations are co-located with the FRC. Information and resources are shared between the offices and, if a family needed the services of LIHEAP, they would be directed to the FRC in the area, the tribe, county or other agency that runs the program in the area, or 211.

[x] d. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):

The SNAP program and Wisconsin Shares use the same eligibility workers in the local county or tribal agency. The Ready4K text messaging program has been contracted by the Lead Agency to provide free text messaging information and curriculum to subscribed parents statewide. Information about this program has been provided via text message.

[x] e. Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) program:

The Lead Agency contracts with CCR&R agencies for a variety of services. Information and resources are shared between the offices and, if a family needed the services of WIC, they would be referred to the organization that runs the program in the county.

[x] f. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):

The Lead Agency contracts with CCR&R agencies for a variety of services. Information and resources are shared between the offices and, if a family needed the services of WIC, they would be referred to the organization that runs the program in the county.

[x] g. Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP):

Wisconsin Shares uses the same eligibility workers as the Medicaid program. Additionally, information regarding CHIP and other health programs provided by Wisconsin's DHS are available at local human services agencies. These agencies are also contracted by the Lead Agency to administer the child care subsidy program. Information is available and can be provided to CCDF families at these agencies. The Ready4K text messaging program has been contracted by the Lead Agency to provide free text messaging information and curriculum to subscribed parents statewide. Information about this program has been provided via text message.

[x] h. Programs carried out under IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C:

The Lead Agency contracts with CCR&R agencies for a variety of services in the area of child care. Many of these organizations are co-located with FRCs. Information and resources are shared between the offices and, if a family identifies a need for services for a child with special needs, the referral will be made to appropriate services in the community (Birth to 3, the public school, etc.)

2.4.3 Information available on physical health and development

Describe how the Lead Agency makes information available to parents, providers and the general public on research and best practices concerning children's development, including physical health and development, particularly healthy eating and physical activity and information about successful parent and family engagement. The description should include:

- what information is provided**
- how the information is provided**
- how the information is tailored to a variety of audiences, including:**

- o parents
- o providers
- o the general public
- any partners in providing this information Description:

The YoungStar website provides information for families on research and best practices around the importance of early experiences, the value of high-quality early child care, the importance of good nutrition, activities for promoting early literacy, the benefits of family engagement, and the importance of knowing developmental milestones. These resources can be found in video and written formats at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents/resources>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents/resources>. These resources are provided in partnership with DHS, DPI, and other local and national entities. The Lead Agency helped create and currently funds provider training around Active Early, Healthy Bites, Breastfeeding Friendly Programs, Gardening, and Family Engagement. It has also incorporated these topics as elements in its QRIS. The Lead Agency funds CCR&Rs to provide information, technical assistance, and resources around physical health and family engagement best practices to providers and families. Additionally, the Lead Agency funded a mass media campaign to emphasize the value of play, community engagement in children’s growth and development, and high-quality early care and education. The campaign focused initially on broad public awareness through the use of billboards and TV/Internet video clips and will increase its targeted messaging to specific audiences such as parents in the future. The resulting webpage will continue to be developed and shared throughout 2021-23. It is available at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/strongeace>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/strongeace>.

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2.4.4 Information on social-emotional, behavioral issues and mental health

Describe how information on the Lead Agency’s policies regarding the social-emotional and behavioral issues and mental health of young children, including positive behavioral intervention and support models based on research and best practices for those from birth to school age, are shared with families, providers, and the general public. At a minimum, include

- what information is provided,
- how the information is provided, and
- how information is tailored to a variety of audiences, and
- include any partners in providing this information. Description:

Expanded awareness of social and emotional learning and trauma-informed care is a centerpiece of ECAC recommendations and Lead Agency partnerships. The YoungStar Parent Outreach campaign included information for parents on the importance of quality child care and positive social-emotional behavior and development. The YoungStar parent webpages at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents> provide parents with resources and educational information on brain development, the effects of toxic stress on infants, and social-emotional development. In addition to these pages, YoungStar also has resources for children with special needs and disabilities: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>. This link provides families with resources and contact

information for screening and assessment, mental health services, and other disability resources which include special education services through IDEA Part C and B, and regional contacts for these programs as well as for services and assistance through Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs. The YoungStar QRIS and CCR&R agencies have a number of activities, trainings, educational and professional development opportunities, and criteria related to increased provider preparedness, child well-being, and child safety. In addition, YoungStar includes a quality indicator for being trained in Wisconsin Pyramid Model for Social and Emotional Competence, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Guiding Children's Behavior in School-Age Care or other equivalent training on meeting the social-emotional needs of children. These trainings include culturally specific approaches through the lens of tribes and provides strategies for effective behavior management including positive behavior interventions and support models. They also promote positive social and emotional development and give providers strategies that are research-based to reduce challenging behaviors and to communicate with parents about these issues. The training is further supported by coaching and mentoring through either YoungStar technical assistance or through specific assistance provided by a Pyramid Model External Coach. Information is also provided to the general public through local human services agencies, CCR&R agencies, FRCs, the Collaborating Partners website and Lead Agency and YoungStar public websites. Partners in this process include: DHS, DPI, Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board, Child Welfare Training Partnership, Community Assistance Agencies such as the Salvation Army, Shine Early Learning, Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), The Registry, UW-Extension, UW-Madison Waisman Center, UW-Milwaukee, Wisconsin Afterschool Network (WAN), Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (WI-AIMH), Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), Wisconsin Birth to 3 Program, Kids Forward, WCCAA, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), WFCCA, DPI Office of Early Learning Head Start State Collaboration Office (OEL HSSCO), Wisconsin Head Start Association (WHSA), Wisconsin Head Start Training & Technical Assistance (T/TA) Center, Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support (WI FACETS), Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health. Finally, the work of connecting families seamlessly to needed programs and supports will be an important focus of the Interagency Council on Early Years (ICEY), consisting of representatives from IDEA Parts C and B, 3K and 4K, Title I Preschool, child care, and Head Start/Early Head Start.

2.4.5 *Policies preventing suspension and expulsion*

Describe the Lead Agency's policies to prevent the suspension and expulsion of children from birth to age 5 in child care and other early childhood programs receiving CCDF funds (98.16(ee)), including how those policies are shared with families, providers, and the general public.

In order to reduce suspension and expulsion in early childhood programs receiving CCDF funds, staff from the Lead Agency participate on a work group comprised of DCF and DPI early education experts to create supports for child care providers to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide consistent care. The Lead Agency has partially completed an online training around understanding race in education, stereotype threats, micro-aggressions, and implicit bias. Staff from the Lead Agency also collaborate with other state agencies on the issues surrounding infant and toddler mental health services to help create a system of consultation that supports child care providers to keep children enrolled in their programs. Additionally, a number of resources have been created for child care regarding the care of children with disabilities. Specifically, staff from the Quality Section have collaborated with the Regulation Section to update the Skills and Strategies course, especially the section on "Meeting the Individual Needs of Children", to incorporate the most current, accurate information on providing care to children with special needs. The Lead Agency's website has

early childhood inclusion webpages specifically designed to connect child care providers to outside resources that help them continue to care for children enrolled in their programs. The Lead Agency is in the process of creating a statewide policy on expulsion and suspension. The first step in policy creation was to develop a survey and collect data. The Lead Agency, in collaboration with DPI, contracted with SFTA to conduct a survey on suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings in Wisconsin ((<https://supportingfamilies.together.org/wp-content/uploads/In-Brief.Enrollment.Expulsion.Resources.pdf>) <https://supportingfamilies.together.org/wp-content/uploads/In-Brief.Enrollment.Expulsion.Resources.pdf>). The survey replicated the national research on child care and preschool expulsions and provided approaches for increasing early care and education providers' ability to support children with challenging behaviors. The second step will be to draft policy and share it with stakeholders. The information gathered from the survey will be used, along with national resources, to review and create policies and supports that address the complexities associated with suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings. Some factors already being considered by the Lead Agency are understanding children's behavior through the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and the Wisconsin Pyramid Model and analyzing administrative data in a cross-agency fashion to include all stakeholders. The combination of current policies and new projects will help the Lead Agency create policies and resources that prevent suspension and expulsion of young children in programs that receive CCDF funds. The final step will be to implement policy and evaluate its impact. Finally, the Lead Agency has invested in partnership with the WI Alliance for Infant Mental Health to offer social emotional strategies and training on trauma-informed care to address challenging behaviors, reduce the likelihood of expulsion and suspension in early childhood settings, and support early childhood programs in creating and implementing suspension and expulsion policies that address the effects of trauma. The Lead Agency will be working closely with tribes to ensure cultural competency exists throughout the training materials to ensure accuracy and inclusion of specific tribal practices.

2.5 Procedures for Providing Information on Developmental Screenings

Lead Agencies are required to provide information on developmental screenings to parents, the general public and, when applicable, child care providers. Information should include:

- Existing resources and services that the state can use in conducting developmental screenings and providing referrals to services for children who receive child care assistance.
- Lead Agencies must also include a description of how a family or child care provider can use these resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children who receive subsidies and who might be at risk of cognitive or other developmental delays, which can include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays (658E(c)(2)(E)(ii)).

This information about the resources can include the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program carried out under title XIX of the Social Security Act and developmental screening services available under IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C, in conducting those developmental screenings and in providing referrals to services for children who receive subsidies. Lead Agencies are required to provide this information to eligible families during CCDF intake and to child care providers through training and education (98.33(c)). Information on developmental screenings, as other consumer education information, should be accessible for individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities.

2.5.1 Certify by describing:

Amended: Effective Date 01/02/2023

a. How the Lead Agency collects and disseminates information on existing resources and services

available for conducting developmental screenings to CCDF parents, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers (98.15(b)(3)).

It is a Lead Agency practice to have information on the importance of developmental screening available to families at an early age. The Lead Agency automatically generates and sends out a letter to all families receiving Wisconsin Shares notifying them about the importance of having their child screened between the ages of birth and age five. This letter provides parents with resources and information about important developmental milestones that children at a certain age should be able to do. The letter also gives parents information about developmental surveys that can be found online, such as those found at (<https://www.cdc.gov/milestones>) <https://www.cdc.gov/milestones>. The letter and the resources available help families know what to look for as their child develops and grows. Information around screening and assessment is also available on the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/about>) Early Childhood Inclusion webpage. Included in this section is information on effective screening, gathering information, as well as pertinent resources, including Wisconsin's Blueprint: A Comprehensive and Aligned System for Early Childhood Screening and Assessment.

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b. The procedures for providing information on and referring families and child care providers to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program—carried out under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)—and developmental screening services available under Part B, Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.).

The Lead Agency has requirements embedded in contracts with CCR&R agencies and within the YoungStar service delivery contract that require providing information, resources, training, and professional development on developmental screenings and how to access and make referrals for screening. CCR&R agencies provide information on developmental screening and the Wisconsin Child Find system to parents and providers. This includes making referrals and requests for screening through Wisconsin's Well Badger Resource Center ((<https://wellbadger.org/>) <https://wellbadger.org>) as well as providing information on Birth to 3 and special education services through Local Education Agencies (LEAs). CCR&Rs also offer training and assistance on implementing the Ages and Stages Questionnaires, Developmental Milestones checklist, and other screening tools. Finally, in Wisconsin some CCR&R agencies serve as the direct service provider of Wisconsin's Birth to 3 programming.

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c. How the Lead Agency gives information on developmental screenings to parents receiving a subsidy as part of the intake process. Include the information provided, ways it is provided, and any partners in this work.

The Lead Agency automatically generates and sends out a letter to all families receiving Wisconsin Shares- as part of the intake process- notifying them about the importance of having their child screened between the ages of birth and age five. This letter provides parents with resources and information about important developmental milestones that children at a certain age should be able to do. The letter also gives parents information about developmental surveys that can be found online, such as those found at <https://www.cdc.gov/milestones>. The letter and the resources available help families know what to look for as their child develops and grows. The developmental screening summary letter is also available at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/ifspiep-connections>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/ifspiep-connections>. The Lead Agency has a major

role in supporting families so that they also consider, and better understand the importance of, high-quality early education practices and the impact that early experiences can have on brain development, social-emotional development, and future success in school and life. The Lead Agency launched a targeted marketing campaign to increase awareness of these issues among families, especially families experiencing homelessness, teen parents, urban populations, migrant and seasonal families, tribal communities, and families with children with special needs. Some highlights from this campaign include: 1) The creation of three videos to educate families on YoungStar and early brain development including "What is YoungStar," "Start with Experiences," and "Toxic Stress". All videos are available on the parent section of the YoungStar website at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents/resources>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents/resources> 2) The development of resource materials for families around topics such as developmental milestones, early literacy, family engagement, and early brain development. These resources are available at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents/resources>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/parents/resources>. 3) The completion of a paid advertising campaign, geared towards families, including messages about high-quality child care through such media as Google AdWords, YouTube, Twitter, print advertisements, and radio. 4) Individualized parent outreach called "Parent Huddles" in which parents were invited by members of their community to learn more about quality child care. These huddles and "Front Porch Chats" were conducted by grassroots outreach organizations contracted with the Lead Agency. 5) The Lead Agency has also developed a web section devoted entirely to Early Childhood Inclusion. The site includes resources if a family has a concern about their child's development; services available for families of children with special needs and disabilities; and information regarding selecting an early education setting for a child with special needs. All information is available at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci> 6) The Lead Agency previously contracted with SFTA to provide Parent Cafés as a method of disseminating child care information as a family-friendly strategy. Some local agencies have continued to host Parent Cafés in order to put families in direct contact with local community supports, such as family resource centers, churches, and community centers which assist in disseminating information about the availability of high-quality child care and local family supports.

Amended: Effective Date 01/02/2023

d. How CCDF families or child care providers receiving CCDF can use the available resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for CCDF children at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays.

The Lead Agency contracts with Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies to provide information on developmental screening and the Wisconsin Child Find system to parents and providers. This includes making referrals and requests for screening, information on Birth to 3 and special education services through Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Child care providers are offered training and assistance on implementing the Ages and Stages Questionnaires, Developmental Milestones checklist, and other screening tools.

Amended: Effective Date 01/02/2023

e. How child care providers receive this information through training and professional development.

Child care providers are offered training and assistance on implementing the Ages and Stages

Questionnaires, Developmental Milestones checklist, and other screening tools. Training and Technical Assistance are provided through contracts with Shine Early Learning, SFTA, and local CCR&R's. Additionally, computer-based training and professional development online modules are available to providers on an ongoing basis. As of 4/30/23 the current contract with SFTA will sunset and all YoungStar Administrative functions will fall under the purview of Shine Early Learning.

Amended: Effective Date 01/02/2023

f. Provide the citation for this policy and procedure related to providing information on developmental screenings.

The Lead Agency partnered with early intervention specialists and special education service providers to develop the YoungStar Early Childhood Inclusion (ECI) webpage at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>. The information contained within the ECI webpage continues to be updated in order to provide parents and providers with the most current information and best practices around supporting infants and toddlers with special needs. Specifically, the webpage (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/child-development>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/child-development> provides families and child care providers with information about the different types of assessments (developmental monitoring, screening, and evaluation). It also contains links for where parents and providers can go to make a referral to either IDEA Part C (early intervention - DHS) or IDEA Part B (early childhood special education - DPI). Also, a link under the Screening Resources within the Developmental Screening menu directs parents and providers to the page dedicated to Wisconsin's Child Find process. Additional resources and contact information for State specific mental health supports (WI-AIMH) and Pyramid Model supports, as well as links to National organizations can be found here: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/resource-library>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/resource-library>. The Lead Agency has requirements embedded in contracts with CCR&R agencies and within the YoungStar service delivery contract that require providing information, resources, training, and professional development on developmental screenings and how to access and make referrals for screening.

2.6 Consumer Statement for Parents Receiving CCDF Funds

Lead Agencies must provide CCDF parents with a consumer statement in hard copy or electronically (such as referral to a consumer education website) that contains specific information about the child care provider they select (98.33 d). Please note that if the consumer statement is provided electronically, Lead Agencies should consider ensuring the statement is accessible to parents, including parents with limited access to the internet, and that parents have a way to contact someone to address their questions.

2.6.1 Certify by describing:

Amended: Effective Date 01/02/2023

a. How and when the Lead Agency provides parents receiving CCDF funds with a consumer statement identifying the requirements for providers and the health and safety record of the provider they have selected.

The consumer statement states: When choosing child care, there are many factors to consider including types of care, price, availability, quality of care, and location. The consumer statement also outlines specific information for parents around the provider's YoungStar rating, regulation results (including violations), and details of monitoring visits. All of this information is critical when a parent is searching for safe and high-quality childcare. The Lead Agency further define "regulated care" as follows: Regulated child care provides a foundation for safe child care settings by conducting background checks, regular inspections and complaint investigations. Types of regulated child care include: Certified Care (three or fewer children under age seven in care) Licensed Family Child Care (up to eight children under age seven) Licensed Group Child Care (nine or more children under age seven) Day Camp (seasonal program for four or more children ages three and older). The public can access the consumer statement on the Lead Agency's website - (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/consumerstatement>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/consumerstatement> - the location of the consumer statement is also shared during the child care eligibility and authorization development processes. Additionally, the Lead Agency references the child care consumer statement in numerous Listserv messages that are sent out to providers statewide.

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b. Certify by checking below the specific information provided to families either in hard copy or electronically. Note: The consumer statement must include the eight requirements listed in the table below.

- Health and safety requirements met by the provider
- Licensing or regulatory requirements met by the provider
- Date the provider was last inspected
- Any history of violations of these requirements
- Any voluntary quality standards met by the provider
- How CCDF subsidies are designed to promote equal access
- How to submit a complaint through the hotline
- How to contact a local resource and referral agency or other community-based organization to receive assistance in finding and enrolling in quality child care

Amended: Effective Date 01/02/2023

c. Provide a link to a sample consumer statement or a description if a link is not available.

The Lead Agency's (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/consumerstatement>) Consumer Statement includes information on how to successfully navigate the selection of a safe and high-quality provider. Additionally, the Consumer Statement specifically outlines the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/complaint>) Child Care Complaint process via the web link and identifies the Lead Agency's Central Office Complaint Hotline telephone number. The complaint webpage also identifies regional and agency contact information for fraud reporting to ensure ease of access when filing a complaint against a child care provider.

3 Stable Child Care Financial Assistance for Families

In providing child care assistance to families, Lead Agencies are required to implement these policies and procedures: a minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination period, a process to account for irregular fluctuations in earnings, a policy ensuring that families' work schedules are not disrupted by program requirements, policies to provide for a job search of no fewer than 3 months if the Lead Agency exercises the option to discontinue assistance, and policies for the graduated phase-out of assistance. In addition, the Lead Agency is also required to describe procedures for the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness and, if applicable, children in foster care.

Note: Lead Agencies are not prohibited from establishing policies that extend eligibility beyond 12 months to align program requirements. For example, Lead Agencies can allow children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start, state or local Prekindergarten, and other collaborative programs to finish the program year or, similarly, parents enrolled in school can have eligibility extended to allow parents to finish their school year. This type of policy promotes continuity for families receiving services through multiple benefit programs.

In this section, Lead Agencies will identify how they define eligible children and families and how the Lead Agency improves access for vulnerable children and families. This section also addresses the policies that protect working families and determine a family's contribution to the child care payment.

Note: When asked for citations, responses can include state statute, regulations, administrative rules, policy manuals or policy issuances. See the Introduction on page 4 for more detail.

3.1 Eligible Children and Families

At the time when eligibility is determined or redetermined, children must (1) be younger than age 13; (2) reside with a family whose income does not exceed 85 percent of the state's median income for a family of the same size and whose family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (as certified by a member of said family); and (3)(a) reside with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program or (b) receives, or needs to receive, protective services and resides with a parent or parents not described in (3)(a) (658P(4); 98.20(a)).

3.1.1 Eligibility criteria: Age of children served

Note: Do not include children incapable of self-care or under court supervision, who are reported below in (b) and (c).

a. The CCDF program serves children from (weeks/months/years)

0

Through 12 years (under age 13).

12

b. Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care (658E(c)(3)(B); 658P(3))?

No

Yes

The upper age is (may not equal or exceed age 19).

18

If yes, provide the Lead Agency definition of physical and/or mental incapacity:

An emotional, physical, or personal need of a child requiring more than the usual amount of care and supervision for the child's age, as documented by a physician, psychologist, special educator, or other qualified licensed professional. A special need includes a developmental disability.

c. Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are under court supervision ((658P(3); 658E(c)(3)(B))?)

No

Yes

The upper age is (may not equal or exceed age 19).

d. How does the Lead Agency define the following eligibility terms?

i. "residing with":

Living in the same household

ii. "in loco parentis":

A person who is living in the same household and acting as the case head of the household with decision-making responsibility and authority and control of the child, formally or informally. A "parent" is a custodial parent, guardian, foster parent, legal custodian or person acting in place of a parent.

3.1.2 Eligibility criteria: Reason for care

a. How does the Lead Agency define the following terms for the purposes of determining CCDF eligibility?

i. Define what is accepted as "Working" (including activities and any hour requirements):

Includes regular employment, self-employment, employer-sponsored training, apprenticeships, sheltered employment, and participation in programs such as AmeriCorps. The Lead Agency does not stipulate a minimum number of work hours required for eligibility purposes.

ii. Define what is accepted as "Job training" (including activities and any hour requirements):

Job training includes technical college or other courses of study. Individuals who are over the age of 18 and are attending technical college or other courses of study are required to demonstrate that the course(s) would facilitate the individual's efforts to maintain employment. This is evaluated by the eligibility worker on a case-by-case basis based on participant needs. Individuals may be eligible for the subsidy under this subdivision for up to two years, per Wis. Statutes, s.49.155(1m)(a)5. Employment is required for 20 hours per month. In addition, job training includes participation in Wisconsin's W-2 TANF program or the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) program.

iii. Define what is accepted as "Education" (including activities and any hour requirements):

Education includes participation in high school, GED or HSED courses. Parents 20 years or older who are engaged in an education activity are also required to maintain employment and be employed for 20 hours per month for up to two years, under Wis. Statutes, s.49.155(1m)(a)5.

iv. Define what is accepted as "Attending" (a job training or educational program) (e.g. travel time, hours required for associated activities such as study groups, lab experiences, time for outside class study or completion of homework):

The Lead Agency defines "attending" as participating in job-training and/or online educational courses, including study time if the parent has a verified learning disability or is participating in the Wisconsin Works (W-2) or Tribal TANF and study hours are included as part of their Employability Plan (EP) or Individual Self-Sufficiency Plan (ISP).

Additionally, travel time to and from the child care provider location to their approved activity.

b. Does the Lead Agency allow parents to qualify for CCDF assistance on the basis of education and training without additional work requirements?

Yes

No. If no, describe the additional work requirements.

Wis. Statutes, s.49.155(1m)(a)5 requires that individuals engaged in an educational activity are also engaged in employment for 20 hours per month. However, individuals who are under 20 years old and have not graduated from high school have no work requirement while they are engaged in high school, GED or HSED coursework.

c. Does the Lead Agency provide child care to children who receive, or need to receive protective services?

No

Yes. If yes:

i. Provide the Lead Agency's definition of "protective services":

For the purposes of Wisconsin Shares eligibility, protective services include children who are placed out of their home into foster homes, or with relatives through either a court directed placement or a voluntary placement. Wis. Statutes, s.49.155(1m) or specific Tribal Law establishes eligibility and requires that parents need child care to participate in specific activities including employment or employment and education/training activities; this includes foster parents and kinship caregivers.

Note: Federal requirements allow other vulnerable children identified by the Lead Agency not formally in child protection to be included in the Lead Agency's definition of protective services for CCDF purposes. A Lead Agency may elect to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care when foster care parents are *not* working or are *not* in education/training activities, but this provision should be included in the protective services definition above.

ii. Are children in foster care considered to be in protective services for the purposes of eligibility at determination?

No

Yes

iii. Does the Lead Agency waive the income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis (98.20 (a)(3)(ii)(A))?

No

Yes

iv. Does the Lead Agency waive the eligible activity (e.g., work, job training, education, etc.) requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis?

No

Yes

v. Does the Lead Agency provide respite care to custodial parents of children in

protective services?

No

Yes

3.1.3 Eligibility criteria: Family Income Limits

Note: The questions in 3.1.3 relate to initial determination. Redetermination is addressed in 3.1.8 and 3.2.5.

a. How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility at the point of initial determination?

Money, wages or salary, adjusted income from self-employment, Social Security, dividends, interest on savings or bonds, income from estates or trusts, net rental income or royalties, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), pensions and annuities, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, alimony and other maintenance payments, and veteran pensions. Child and family support payments when combined exceed \$1,250 per month; the employer-paid portion of income earned through Wisconsin Works (W-2, Wisconsin's TANF program), Trial Employment Match Program (TEMP), Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ), and Transitional Jobs (TJ) employment positions; private educational loans, scholarships, and grants that are not used for tuition and books.

b. Provide the CCDF income eligibility limits in the table below at the time of initial determination. Complete columns (i) and (ii) based on maximum eligibility at initial entry into CCDF. Complete columns (iii) and (iv) *only if* the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85 percent of the current state median income (SMI) at the initial eligibility determination point. If the income eligibility limits are not statewide, please complete the chart below using the most populous area of the state or territory (defined as the area serving highest number of CCDF children) and respond to c. below the table.

| | (i) | (ii) | (iii) | (iv) |
|-------------|------------------------|---|--|---|
| Family Size | 100% of SMI (\$/Month) | 85% of SMI (\$/Month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85] | (IF APPLICABLE) (\$/Month) Maximum Initial or First Tier Income Limit (or Threshold) if Lower than 85% of Current SMI | (IF APPLICABLE) (% of SMI) [Divide (iii) by (i), multiply by 100] Income Level if Lower than 85% of Current SMI |
| 1 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2 | \$5,649 | \$4,802 | \$2,686 | 49% |
| 3 | \$6,978 | \$5,931 | \$3,386 | 50% |
| 4 | \$8,307 | \$7,061 | \$4,085 | 51% |
| 5 | \$9,637 | \$8,191 | \$4,785 | 52% |

c. If the income eligibility limits are not statewide, describe how many jurisdictions set their own income eligibility limits and provide the income limit ranges across the jurisdictions (e.g. range from [lowest limit] to [highest limit])(98.16(i)(3)).

N/A - income limits are statewide.

d. State Median Income (SMI) source and year

Reminder: Income limits must be established and reported in terms of current SMI based on the most recent data published by the Bureau of the Census (98.20(a)(2)(i)) even if the federal poverty level is used in implementing the program. SMI guidelines are available at: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/resource/liheap-im-2020-02-state-median-income-estimates-for-optional-use-fy2020-and-mandatory-use-fy2021?utm_medium=rss .

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), 2020

d. Identify the most populous area of the state (defined as the area serving the highest number of CCDF children) used to complete the chart in 3.1.3 b.

Milwaukee County - City of Milwaukee

e. What is the effective date for these eligibility limits reported in 3.1.3 b?

02/01/2020

f. Provide the citation or link, if available, for the income eligibility limits.

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/manuals/wishares-cc-manual/> (Sections 1.4.1.1 and 1.4.1.2)

3.1.4 Family asset limit

Lead Agencies are required to ensure that children receiving CCDF funds do not have family assets that exceed \$1,000,000, as certified by a family member (98.20(a)(2)(ii)).

a. Describe how the family member certifies that family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (e.g., a checkoff on the CCDF application).

The question of liquid assets is asked during the intake interview. The applicant is asked if the family has liquid assets greater than \$25,000. If the answer is less than \$25,000, no further verification is needed. If the answer is unknown or greater than \$25,000, then the parent will be asked to provide some verification.

b. Does the Lead Agency waive the asset limit on a case-by-case basis for families defined as receiving, or in need of, protective services?

No

Yes. If yes, describe the policy or procedure and provide citation:

On a case-by-case basis, foster families and children in court-ordered out-of-home placements may be exempt from the asset test for financial eligibility, per Wis. Statutes, s.49.155(1m)(cm).

3.1.5 Additional eligibility conditions

Describe any additional eligibility conditions or rules, which are applied by the Lead Agency (98.20(b)) during:

a. eligibility determination.

Additional eligibility conditions that are limited to once per lifetime at the initial eligibility determination include: identity of all parents, Social Security number for children, date of birth for each family member, and citizenship of children. In addition, residency verification, alien status of children, marital status, and child placement arrangements must be verified if questionable or if changed. The Lead Agency has an ongoing eligibility requirement for parents to cooperate with the Child Support agency to identify and locate an absent parent and obtain a child support order.

b. eligibility redetermination.

**Verification of income, assets, and approved activity.
Address, residency, child placement, and marital status
would only need to be verified if questionable.**

3.1.6 Continuity for Working Families

Lead Agencies are required to take into consideration children’s development and promote continuity of care when authorizing child care services (98.21(f); 98.16(h)(6)). Lead Agencies are reminded that authorized child care services are not required to be strictly based on the work, training, or education schedule of the parent (98.21 (g)). Check the approaches, if applicable, that the Lead Agency uses when considering children’s development and promoting continuity of care when authorizing child care services.

a. Coordinating with Head Start, Prekindergarten, other early learning programs, or school-age programs to create a package of arrangements that accommodates parents’ work schedules

b. Inquiring about whether the child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP)

c. Establishing minimum eligibility periods longer than 12 months

d. Using cross-enrollment or referrals to other public benefits

e. Working with IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C staff to explore how services included in a child’s IEP or IFSP can be supported and/or provided onsite and in collaboration with child care services

f. Working with entities that may provide other child support services.

g. Providing more intensive case management for families with children with multiple risk factors

h. Implementing policies and procedures that promote universal design to ensure that activities and environments are accessible to all children, including children with sensory, physical, or other disabilities

i. Other. Describe:

Wis. Statutes, s.49.155(6g)(a)5 allows the child's learning and development to be considered and continuity of care to be promoted when authorizing hours of child care. The Lead Agency is not required to limit authorized hours based on the parent's schedule of activities or the number of hours the parent spends in those activities. Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 201.039(2g)(b) states that during a parent's 12-month eligibility period, parents may continue the most recent authorization, extend the most recent authorization, or receive an authorization for up to the same number of hours as the parent's previous authorization when any of the following changes begin: 1. The parent is continuing to participate in an approved activity, but the number of hours that the assistance group needs child care is decreasing. 2. The parent is beginning a temporary break. 3. The parent is beginning an approved activity search period.

3.1.7 How the Lead Agency accounts for Fluctuation in earnings.

Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate how their processes for initial determination and redetermination take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings (658E(c)(2)(N)(i)(II) and 98.21(c)). The Lead Agency must put in place policies that ensure that temporary increases in income, including temporary increases that can result in a monthly income exceeding 85 percent of state median income (SMI) (calculated on a monthly basis) from seasonal employment or other temporary work schedules, do not affect eligibility or family co-payments (98.21(c)). Check the processes that the Lead Agency uses to take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings.

- a. Average the family's earnings over a period of time (e.g. 12 months).
- b. Request earning statements that are most representative of the family's monthly income.
- c. Deduct temporary or irregular increases in wages from the family's standard income level.
- d. Other. Describe:

Because families must be below 185% FPL at application, the family copayment per hour is capped based on the family's lowest FPL during the 12-month eligibility period and will not increase based on an increase in income until the following annual eligibility renewal. If the family's income was below 190% FPL at the family's annual eligibility renewal and the parent's income increases during the following 12-month eligibility period, the family copayment per hour is capped based on the family's lowest FPL during the 12-month eligibility period. If a family experiences an increase in income, their copayment per hour will not increase until the family's next annual eligibility renewal. If the family income was above 190% FPL but below 200% FPL at their previous annual eligibility renewal, the family's copayment per hour may increase based on an increase in income but will not exceed the copayment per hour for 200% FPL until the family's next annual eligibility renewal. If the family's income was above 200% FPL at their previous renewal, the family copayment will increase \$1 for every \$3 by which the family income exceeds 200% FPL until the family reaches 85% SMI at which point eligibility ends. If a family's income decreases at any time during the eligibility period, the copayment per hour is decreased accordingly.

3.1.8 Eligibility criteria at the time of eligibility determination and redetermination

Lead Agencies are required to have procedures for documenting and verifying that children receiving CCDF funds meet eligibility criteria at the time of eligibility determination and redetermination (98.68(c)). Lead Agencies should note that there are no federal requirements for specific documentation or verification procedures. Check the information that the Lead Agency documents and verifies at initial determination and redetermination and describe, at a minimum, what information is required and how often. Check all that apply.

- a. Applicant identity
 - Required at Initial Determination
 - Required at Redetermination

Information and Description

Identity is verified by driver's license, State-issued ID card, Photo Employee ID card, Photo Student ID card, Military ID card, Native American ID card issued by a federally recognized Tribe, Photo ID issued by USCIS, U.S. Passport, or data exchange with the Social Security Administration. Identity is verified once per lifetime.

- b. Applicant's relationship to the child
 - Required at Initial Determination

Required at Redetermination

Information and Description

Birth records, court records or self-declaration on signed application materials. This is only rechecked if it becomes questionable, except in cases of kinship or foster care placements. Kinship or foster care placements must always be verified by any of the following: Current Voluntary Placement Agreement; current Emergency Temporary Physical Custody order; Current court order under Wis. Stat. Ch. 48 or 938 or any Wisconsin tribal law that is substantially similar to Wisconsin Stat. Ch. 48 or 938; DCF-F-5190-E or a letter from the child's caseworker (county or tribal) that includes: The name and address of the individual with whom the child is placed, The name and date of birth of the child, as well as the date the out-of-home care placement began, the date the out-of-home care placement will end (if applicable), the name and date the letter was completed, and the telephone number for the caseworker.

c. Child's information for determining eligibility (e.g., identity, age, citizen/immigration status)

Required at Initial Determination

Required at Redetermination

Information and Description

The child's Social Security Number, date of birth and citizenship or qualified citizen status are documented and verified only once per lifetime. Immigration status can change and is updated; if this changes the agency worker will verify this through the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) resource.

d. Work

Required at Initial Determination

Required at Redetermination

Information and Description

Employment is verified by pay stubs, employment verification form, or a signed letter from the employer. Work is verified each time there is an employment change and at eligibility renewal.

e. Job training or educational program

Required at Initial Determination

Required at Redetermination

Information and Description

School schedules are provided by the applicant. Parents who are engaged in the TANF program or the FSET program have Employability Plans that verify their activities. Job training or educational programs are verified when they change and at eligibility renewal.

f. Family income

Required at Initial Determination

Required at Redetermination

Information and Description

Pay stubs, employer verification, Wisconsin New Hire Reports and National New Hire Reports for those who also request a Health Care program, and a State Wage Record data exchange. Unearned income such as Unemployment Insurance is verified by Unemployment Compensation award letter (unless the income has been auto-populated in CWW by the Unemployment Insurance data exchange); Divorce documents showing family support, child support, maintenance, or financial settlement; Documentation of court-awarded settlement; Social Security award letter; Veteran's Administration award letter; educational financial aid award letter; or tax records showing unearned income. Household earned and unearned income must be verified only at application and each eligibility renewal.

g. Household composition

Required at Initial Determination

Required at Redetermination

Information and Description

The Lead Agency accepts self-declaration of household composition unless questionable. If

questionable, the family may provide a lease agreement or other documentation that includes a list of household residents.

h. Applicant residence. Describe:

Required at Initial Determination

Required at Redetermination

Information and Description

The applicant residence may be verified by a lease agreement; utility bill for water, gas, electricity, or telephone that includes name and address; mortgage receipt; subsidized housing program approval document; weatherization program approval document; paycheck stub that includes name, address, and employer; current Wisconsin driver's license; current Wisconsin ID card; current motor vehicle registration. Applicant residence is verified when an address change is reported.

i. Other. Describe:

Required at Initial Determination

Required at Redetermination

Information and Description

Wis. Admin. Code DCF 101.11 requires that all non-financial and financial eligibility criteria be verified prior to providing a child care subsidy. Wis. Admin. Code DCF 201.037 requires parents to notify the local agency of any change in circumstances that affect eligibility or the need for child care within ten days of the change. The local agency must determine ongoing eligibility in a timely manner following a parent's report of a change in circumstances that affects eligibility or the need for child care.

3.1.9 Strategies for timely eligibility determinations

Which strategies, if any, will the Lead Agency use to ensure the timeliness of eligibility determinations upon receipt of applications? Check all that apply.

a. Time limit for making eligibility determinations. Describe length of time:

Eligibility determinations must be completed within 30 days of the signed request per Wis. Admin. Code DCF 101.03(31). The intake interview must be scheduled to occur within five days of the request for assistance. All needed verification must be submitted to the agency within seven days of the interview per Wis. Admin. Code DCF 101.08(1). The applicant may reschedule the intake interview and may request an extension to the seven-day due date for the verification items. However, the entire process must be completed within 30 days. ((<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/manuals/wishares-cc-manual/>) Wisconsin Shares Policy Chapter 1, section 1.2 - 1.2.7).

b. Track and monitor the eligibility determination process

c. Other. Describe:

N/A

d. None

3.1.10 Exception to TANF work requirements

Informing parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirement.

Lead Agencies are required to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child younger than age 6 (98.16(v); 98.33(f)).

Lead Agencies must coordinate with TANF programs to ensure that TANF families with young children will be informed of their right not to be sanctioned if they meet the criteria set forth by the state/territory TANF agency in accordance with Section 407(e)(2) of the Social Security Act.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care.

Note: The TANF agency, not the CCDF Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record.

a. Identify the TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions:

The TANF program is also part of the Lead Agency and is managed by the Division of Family and Economic Security (DFES). The TANF program is known as the Wisconsin Works (W-2) program.

b. Provide the following definitions established by the TANF agency:

i. "Appropriate child care":

The W-2 program defines appropriate care as both formal and informal child care.

ii. "Reasonable distance":

The W-2 program defines reasonable distance as no more than 60 minutes travel time one-way, using available transportation, from the parent's home to the child care provider's location to the parent's work site. Travel time may be extended up to 90 minutes one-way if there is a good placement opportunity for the participant and the parent is willing to enter into this arrangement.

iii. "Unsuitability of informal child care":

The W-2 program defines informal child care as an arrangement in which a child care provider is not regulated (licensed or certified). Parents who use informal child care are not eligible for child care assistance. [Unsuitability] is not defined by the W-2 program; this would be determined by the parent.

iv. "Affordable child care arrangements":

The W-2 program does not define affordable child care arrangements.

c. How are parents who receive TANF benefits informed about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirements?

i. In writing

ii. Verbally

iii. Other. Describe:

N/A

d. Provide the citation for the TANF policy or procedure:

Wis. Admin. Code DCF 101.20(1)(b) A single parent placed in a W-2 Employment Position cannot be sanctioned for non-participation in any W-2 activities during a period of time when s/he is unable to obtain child care and the W-2 agency is unable to provide child care or refer the participant to alternate child care arrangements.

3.2 Family Contribution to Payments

Lead Agencies are required to establish and periodically revise a sliding-fee scale for CCDF families that varies based on income and the size of the family to determine each family’s contribution (i.e., co-payment) that is not a barrier to families receiving CCDF funds (658E(c)(5)). In addition to income and the size of the family, the Lead Agency may use other factors when determining family contributions/co-payments. Lead Agencies, however, may NOT use cost of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining co-payments (98.45(k)(2)). Questions 3.2.1 through 3.2.4 address co-payments during the initial/entry-eligibility period.

To help families transition off child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust co-pay amounts for families determined to be eligible under a graduated phase-out. Question 3.2.5 addresses co-payments during the graduated phase-out period.

3.2.1 CCDF payments according to family size

Provide the CCDF co-payments in the chart below according to family size for **one** child in care.

a. Complete the chart based on the most populous area of the state or territory (defined as the area serving the highest number of CCDF children, aligned to the response provided in 3.1.3 e).

| | <i>(a)</i> | <i>(b)</i> | <i>(c)</i> | <i>(d)</i> | <i>(e)</i> | <i>(f)</i> |
|-------------|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| Family size | Lowest initial or First Tier Income Level where family is first charged co-pay (greater than \$0) | What is the monthly co-payment for a family of this size based on the income level in (a)? | What percentage of income is this co-payment in (b)? | Highest initial or First Tier Income Level before a family is no longer eligible. | What is the Monthly co-payment for a family of this size based on the income level in (d)? | What percentage of income is this co-payment in (d)? |
| 1 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 2 | \$73 | \$22.80 | 31% | \$4,613 | \$925 | 20% |
| 3 | \$92 | \$22.80 | 25% | \$5,698 | \$1,034 | 18% |
| 4 | \$110 | \$22.80 | 21% | \$6,784 | \$1,144 | 17% |
| 5 | \$129 | \$22.80 | 18% | \$7,869 | \$1,253 | 16% |

b. If the sliding-fee scale is not statewide (i.e., county-administered states):

- i. N/A. Sliding fee scale is statewide
- ii. Identify the most populous area of the state (defined as the area serving the highest number of CCDF children) used to complete the chart above.
Milwaukee County -

Additionally, the chart in the 2022-2024 Plan is correct. The changes are due to how the questions were answered in the 2019-2021 Plan rather than changes to the copayment structure. The single amount in Column A of the 2022-2024 Plan is 5% FPL; however, copayments are deducted for

families with zero countable monthly income. The copayment is not a flat rate but rather varies by the family's FPL, hours of care, and number of children with authorizations for care. The percentage of income can be even higher than 31% if the family's income is below 5% FPL. The response for the 2019-2021 Plan represented \$0 monthly income to \$1028 monthly income (74% FPL). Copayments are charged even if the family has no countable income for a month. The 2022-2024 Plan used \$73 monthly income (5% FPL) as the lowest "tier" income; however, copayments are still charged for families with no countable income. 74% FPL was used in the 2019-2021 Plan as the income limit because this was the highest income before the copayment per hour would increase.

Copayments have not increased since implementation of the final CCDBG requirements in November 2018. The current copayment chart is available at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/pdf/wishares-copay-schedule.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/pdf/wishares-copay-schedule.pdf>.

As indicated in the previous response, the copayment amount in the 2019-2021 CCDF Plan was not implemented. A copayment of \$0.15 per hour for families with income less than 70% FPL was implemented in November 2018 and has not increased since implementation. It is worth noting that the copayment amount is not a flat rate; it is based on the hours of care that the child needs and the number of children in the family with authorizations for care. The copayment for a family with income less than 70% FPL could range from \$0.15 for one child authorized for one hour of care per month to \$22.80 for one child authorized for 153 hours or more per month. Authorized hours are subsidized up to 35 hours per week (153 hours per month) and then from 51-75 hours per week (5-109 hours per month in addition to the 153 hours per month). Copayments are capped at 152 hours per month, regardless of the number of hours above 152 that are authorized. (note: 152 and 153 are not typos – that is actually how it works)

- iii. Describe how many jurisdictions set their own sliding-fee scale (98.16(i)(3)).
N/A

c. What is the effective date of the sliding-fee scale(s)?

01/01/2021

d. Provide the link(s) to the sliding-fee scale:

(https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/dcf/201_252/201.pdf#page=12)

https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/dcf/201_252/201.pdf#page=12

3.2.2 Family contribution calculation

How will the family's contribution be calculated, and to whom will it be applied? Check all that apply under a. or b.

a. The fee is a dollar amount and (check all that apply):

i. The fee is per child, with the same fee for each child.

ii. The fee is per child and is discounted for two or more children.

iii. The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.

iv. No additional fee is charged after a certain number of children.

v. The fee is per family.

vi. The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe:

N/A

vii. Other. Describe:

The fee is a dollar amount based on the number of children in care up to a maximum number of hours per child and per family.

b. The fee is a percent of income and (check all that apply):

i. The fee is per child, with the same percentage applied for each child.

ii. The fee is per child, and a discounted percentage is applied for two or more children.

iii. The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.

iv. No additional percentage is charged after a certain number of children.

v. The fee is per family.

vi. The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe:

N/A

vii. Other. Describe:

N/A

3.2.3 Other factors to determine family's co-payment

Does the Lead Agency use other factors in addition to income and family size to determine _____

each family's co-payment (658E(c)(3)(B))? Reminder: Lead Agencies may NOT use cost of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining co-payments (98.45(k)(2)).

No

Yes. If yes, check and describe those additional factors below.

a. Number of hours the child is in care. Describe:

The Lead Agency determines co-payment amounts based on the following:

**Assistance Group's Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (based on family size and income),
Number of children in subsidized child care, and
Sum of subsidized hours for all children in the Assistance Group (AG)**

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/manuals/wishares-cc-manual/>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/manuals/wishares-cc-manual/> (2.5.1)

b. Lower co-payments for a higher quality of care, as defined by the state/territory.
Describe:

N/A

c. Other. Describe:

The co-payment is per family based on total number of hours children are in care and then distributed to each child based on the percentage of hours that child has of the family's total hours per month.

The Lead Agency also uses the number of children in subsidized child care and the AG's FPL levels.

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3.2.4 Waiving family contributions/co-payments

The Lead Agency may waive contributions/co-payments from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size (98.45(k)) or for families who are receiving or needing to receive protective services, on a case-by-case basis, as determined for purposes of CCDF eligibility, or who meet other criteria established by the Lead Agency (98.45(k)(4)). Does the Lead Agency waive family contributions/co-payments for any of the following? Check all that apply.

No, the Lead Agency does not waive family contributions/co-payments.

Yes, the Lead Agency waives family contributions/co-payments. If yes, identify and describe which families have their family contributions/co-payments waived.

a. Families with an income at or below the Federal poverty level for families of the same size.
Describe the policy and provide the policy citation.

N/A

b. Families who are receiving or needing to receive protective services on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the Lead Agency for purposes of CCDF eligibility. Describe the policy and

provide the policy citation.

Co-payments are waived for Foster/Subsidized Guardianships/Interim Caretakers, court-ordered kinship placements on a case-by-case basis.

[x] c. Families meeting other criteria established by the Lead Agency. Describe the policy.

Co-payments are waived for teen parents participating in the Learnfare program who have a custodial parent participating in the W-2 program. Additionally, effective 10/1/22, the Lead Agency implemented the Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care Pilot to specifically provide child care services to children currently participating in the WI Department of Health Services (DHS) Birth to 3 program. In order to be eligible for this program the family/child must meet the following requirements:

The family resides in the State of Wisconsin

The child is under the age of three when the child care authorization begins

The child is currently enrolled in the DHS Birth to 3 program and has an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) in place

The child is a citizen or a qualified immigrant

The child has a valid Social Security Number (SSN)

Under this pilot program families are not required to pay towards the cost of child care and the program is run outside of the Wisconsin Shares program to address the needs of children currently enrolled in the DHS Birth to 3 program. Child care authorizations will be developed for a 12-month period, as required by CCDF regulations, and funds will be paid directly to the provider.

3.2.5 Graduated phase-out of assistance at redetermination

Policies and processes for graduated phase-out of assistance at redetermination.

Lead Agencies that establish initial family income eligibility below 85 percent of state median income (SMI) are required to provide a graduated phase-out of assistance for families whose income has increased above the state's initial income threshold at the time of redetermination but remains below the federal threshold of 85 percent of the state median income (98.21 (b)(1)). Providing a graduated phase-out promotes continuity by allowing for wage growth, allows for a tapered transition out of the child care subsidy program as income increases, and supports long-term self-sufficiency for families.

Lead Agencies that provide a graduated phase-out must implement a two-tiered eligibility threshold, with the second tier of eligibility (used at the time of eligibility redetermination) to be set at:

- (i) 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size.
- (ii) An amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold that:
 - (A) Takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family.
 - (B) Provides justification that the second eligibility threshold is:
 - (1) Sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability.
 - (2) Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption.

At redetermination, a child shall be considered eligible if his or her parents are working or attending a job training or educational program even if their income exceeds the Lead Agency's

income limit to initially qualify for assistance as long as their income does not exceed the second tier of eligibility (98.21(a); 98.21(b)(1)). Note that once deemed eligible, the family shall be considered eligible for a full minimum 12-month eligibility period, even if their income exceeds the second tier of eligibility during the eligibility period, as long as it does not exceed 85 percent of SMI.

A family eligible for services via the graduated phase-out of assistance is considered eligible under the same conditions as other eligible families with the exception of the co-payment restrictions, which do not apply to a graduated phase-out. To help families transition from child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust co-pay amounts for families whose children are determined eligible under a graduated phase-out and may require additional reporting on changes in family income. However, Lead Agencies must still ensure that any additional reporting requirements do not constitute an undue burden on families.

a. Check and describe the option that best identifies the Lead Agency's policies and procedures regarding the graduated phase-out of assistance.

N/A. The Lead Agency sets its initial eligibility threshold at 85 percent of SMI and therefore, is not required to provide a graduated phase-out period. (If checked, skip to subsection 3.3)

The Lead Agency sets the second tier of eligibility at 85 percent of SMI.

A. Describe the policies and procedures.

To be initially eligible, family income must be below 185% FPL. At redetermination, a family may remain eligible if family income exceeds 185% FPL but is below 85% SMI. The only difference in reporting requirements is that families with income at or below 185% FPL must report if their gross monthly household income, whether earned or unearned, increases by \$250 or more, while a family with income above 185% FPL must report if their household's gross monthly income, whether earned or unearned, exceeds a dollar amount that will bring the family's income to above the next 5% FPL increment.

B. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

Second tier of eligibility: Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(1)(c)1d.b. Reporting requirements: Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 201.037

The Lead Agency sets the second tier of eligibility at an amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold.

A. Provide the income level for the second tier of eligibility for a family of three:

N/A

B. Describe how the second eligibility threshold:

1. Takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family:

N/A

2. Is sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability:

N/A

3. Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption:

N/A

4. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure related to the second eligibility threshold:

N/A

b. To help families transition from assistance, does the Lead Agency gradually adjust co-payments for families eligible under the graduated phase-out period?

No

Yes

i. If yes, describe how the Lead Agency gradually adjusts co-payments for families under a graduated phase-out:

If family income is at or above 190% FPL, but not exceeding 200% FPL, at the previous eligibility redetermination, the family co-payment may increase based on increases in income but will not exceed the family co-payment for 200% FPL until the next annual eligibility determination. If family income is at or above 200% FPL at the previous eligibility redetermination, the family's co-payment will increase \$1 for every \$3 by which family income exceeds 200% FPL until the family reaches 85% SMI.

ii. If yes, does the Lead Agency require additional reporting requirements during the graduated phase-out period? (Note: Additional reporting requirements are also discussed in section 3.4.3 of the Plan.)

No

Yes. Describe:

Reporting requirements for a family with income above 185% FPL at their previous eligibility redetermination must report if their household's gross monthly income, whether earned or unearned, exceeds a dollar amount that will bring the family's income to above the next 5% FPL increment.

3.3 Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children and Families

Lead Agencies are required to give priority for child care assistance to children with special needs, which can include vulnerable populations, in families with very low incomes, and to children experiencing homelessness (658E(c)(3)(B); 98.46(a)). The prioritization of CCDF assistance services is not limited to eligibility determination. Other ways to give priority may include the establishment of a waiting list or the ranking of eligible families in priority order to be served.

Note: CCDF defines "child experiencing homelessness" as a child who is homeless, as defined in Section 725 of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a) (98.2).

3.3.1 Increasing access for vulnerable children and families

Describe how the Lead Agency defines:

a. "Children with special needs":

A developmental, emotional, behavioral, physical or personal need of a child requiring more than the usual amount of care and supervision for the child's age, as documented by a physician, psychologist, special educator, or other qualified licensed professional, per Wis. Admin. Code DCF 201.02(20).

b. "Families with very low incomes":

The Lead Agency does not define "families with very low income" but sets financial eligibility limits based on 42 U.S.C. 9902(2) per Wis.

Statutes s. 49.001(5).

3.3.2 Priority populations

Identify how the Lead Agency will prioritize or target child care services for the following children and families:

Note: If waiving co-payments is checked, Lead Agencies will need to provide further information in question 3.2.4. Paying higher rates for accessing higher quality care is addressed in 4.3.3 and using grants or contracts to reserve spots is addressed in 4.1.6.

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a. Complete the table below to indicate how the identified populations are prioritized or targeted.

| Population Prioritized | Prioritize for enrollment in child care services | Serve without placing on waiting list | Waive co-payments (on a case-by-case basis). As described in 3.2.4. | Pay higher rate for access to higher quality care | Using grants or contracts to reserve spots |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Children with special needs | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| Families with very low incomes | [] | [x] | [] | [] | [] |
| Children experiencing homelessness, as defined by the CCDF | [] | [x] | [] | [] | [] |
| Families receiving TANF, those attempting to transition off TANF, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF (98.16(i)(4)) | [] | [x] | [] | [] | [] |

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b. If applicable, identify and describe any other ways the identified populations in the table above are prioritized or targeted.

The Lead Agency can provide eligible parents who have a child with a special need or disability with an increased subsidy benefit to assist their child care provider with any additional costs for services, materials, and/or equipment necessary to support the inclusive care of the child, per Wis. Admin. Code DCF 201.06(7). The Lead Agency's Inclusive Birth to 3 Child Care Pilot prioritizes child care funding for those families/children who are currently participating in the WI DCF Birth to 3 program and have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) in place. Participants in this pilot will receive a 12-month child care authorization with no family share or co-payment requirement.

Additionally, families experiencing homelessness may be determined eligible and receive services prior to completing address verification. No other verification requirements are waived. Per Wis. Statutes, s. 49.145(2)(g) an extension may be available for families in need of more time to obtain the required verification.

Furthermore, the Lead Agency does not currently have a priority enrollment type; through use of TANF funds it has assured that all families have equal access to the subsidy program. All financially and non-financially eligible families are served. The Lead Agency waives a copayment increase for families transitioning off the TANF program into regular employment. Until their next eligibility review, their copayment remains at the same rate as before their new earned income.

3.3.3 Other priority groups

List and define any other priority groups established by the Lead Agency.

The Lead Agency has identified vulnerable and underserved populations that include families experiencing employment hardships, military families, children with an incarcerated or formerly incarcerated parent, and children of color, and Native American children.

3.3.4 Additional priority groups

Describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes services for the additional priority groups identified in 3.3.3.

The Lead Agency will collaborate efforts with all ECE stakeholders to ensure that priority groups receive coordinated services that align with the agency's strategic efforts. For example, collaboration will include working with local, tribal, and regional education systems to ensure children are well-prepared for K-12 educational programs.

3.3.5 Enrollment and outreach for families experiencing homelessness

Lead Agencies are required to expend CCDF funds to (1) permit the enrollment (after an initial eligibility determination) of children experiencing homelessness while required documentation is obtained, (2) provide training and technical assistance to child care providers and the appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving children and families experiencing homelessness (addressed in section 6), and (3) conduct specific outreach to families experiencing homelessness(658E(c)(3); 98.51).

a. Describe the procedures to permit the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness while required documentation is obtained.

Families experiencing homelessness are not required to provide verification of homeless status or address but must verbally state that they reside in Wisconsin and intend to continue residing in Wisconsin. No other verification requirements may be waived. Wis. Statutes, s. 49.145(2)(g) allows extensions to the verification time limits for families who need more time

to obtain required verification. Families may also request assistance from the local agency to obtain needed verification information.

b. Check, where applicable, the procedures used to conduct outreach for children experiencing homelessness (as defined by CCDF Rule) and their families.

i. Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations

ii. Partnerships with community-based organizations

iii. Partnering with homeless service providers, McKinney-Vento liaisons, and others who work with families experiencing homelessness to provide referrals to child care

iv. Other:

N/A

Note: The Lead Agency shall pay any amount owed to a child care provider for services provided as a result of the initial eligibility determination, and any CCDF payment made prior to the final eligibility determination shall not be considered an error or improper payment (98.51(a)(1)(ii)).

3.3.6 Grace period

Lead Agencies must establish a grace period that allows children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care to receive CCDF assistance while providing their families with a reasonable time to take any necessary actions to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements (as described in section 5). The length of such a grace period shall be established in consultation with the state, territorial, or tribal health agency (658E(c)(2)(l)(i)(I); 98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)).

Note: Any payment for such a child during the grace period shall not be considered an error or improper payment (98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)(2)).

a. Describe procedures to provide a grace period to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements, including how the length of the grace period was established in consultation with the state, territorial, or tribal health agency for:

i. Children experiencing homelessness (as defined by the CCDF Final Rule).

Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Rules allow a 30-school day grace period after the date on which a child is admitted (first day of attendance) to a child care center to supply immunization records. Many resources are available on the Lead Agency's website to assist child care programs in strategizing ways to best serve and work with families experiencing homelessness. Resources include guidance for programs to utilize the grace period in which children can receive services while families are taking the necessary actions to comply with the immunization and other documentation requirements, and also to work closely with families to help them collect the appropriate documentation. In the development of the 30-day grace period the Lead Agency worked with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and all tribal and county income maintenance (IM) agencies to ensure that the identified grace period was consistent with other federally supported IM programs (i.e. Food Share, Medicaid, Wisconsin BadgerCare, etc.).

Provide the citation for this policy and procedure.

Wis. Statutes, s.252.04(2) and Wis. Admin. Code DHS 144.07(1m).

ii. Children who are in foster care.

The Lead Agency provides parents a grace period of 30-school days to supply immunization records. Programs are required to comply with these provisions.

Provide the citation for this policy and procedure.

Wis. Statutes, s.252.04 and Wis. Admin. Code DHS 144

b. Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates with licensing agencies and other relevant state, territorial, tribal, and local agencies to provide referrals and support to help families with children receiving services during a grace period comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements (98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)(4)).

The Lead Agency partners with the state Department of Health Services (DHS) as well as with local health departments to ensure providers are aware of local services where they can refer families to meet immunization and other health and safety requirements. The Lead Agency in collaboration with the State Cross Sector Homelessness Task Force has developed a Homelessness Tool Kit to help serve families and children experiencing homelessness: (<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/CPlinkedDocs/Final-Proof.pdf>) <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/CPlinkedDocs/Final-Proof.pdf>. This kit contains resources and information for assisting families with children in child care programs. A set of modules has been created to compliment the information found in the tool kit. These materials and/or resource information is available on our website and through CCR&Rs and/or family resource centers: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/homelessness/identify-homelessness.pdf>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/homelessness/identify-homelessness.pdf> and (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/connectionscount>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/connectionscount>. The Lead Agency has developed a webpage dedicated to supporting families experiencing homelessness: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/homelessness>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/homelessness>. CCR&Rs use this information to support families that contact the agency to be connected to available supports. The CCR&Rs provide referrals to families (via phone, in person, and email) related to available child care, information on Wisconsin Shares subsidy qualifications and the application process, as well as local community supports to avoid homelessness.

c. Does the Lead Agency establish grace periods for other children who are not experiencing homelessness or in foster care?

No

Yes. Describe:

All families are allowed a 30-school day grace period after the child's first day of attendance to provide immunization records.

3.4 Continuity for Working Families

3.4.1 Minimum 12-month eligibility

The Lead Agency is required to establish a minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination period:

- regardless of changes in income. Lead Agencies may not terminate CCDF assistance during the minimum 12-month period if a family has an increase in income that exceeds the state's income eligibility threshold but not the federal threshold of 85 percent of state median income (SMI).
- regardless of temporary changes in participation in work, training, or educational activities (658E(c)(2)(N)(i) and (ii)).

The Lead Agency may not terminate assistance prior to the end of the minimum 12-month period if a family experiences a temporary job loss or a temporary change in participation in a training or educational activity. Any temporary change cannot have a time limit (e.g. 60 days, 90 days, etc.). A temporary change in eligible activity includes, at a minimum:

1. any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness
 2. any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working
 3. any student holiday or break for a parent participating in a training or educational program
 4. any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending a training or educational program
 5. any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program that does not exceed 3 months or a longer period of time established by the Lead Agency
 6. a child turning 13 years old during the minimum 12-month eligibility period (except as described in 3.1.1)
 7. any changes in residency within the state, territory, or tribal service area
- a. Describe the Lead Agency’s policies and procedures related to providing a minimum 12- month eligibility period at initial eligibility determination and redetermination and provide a citation for these policies or procedures.

Wisconsin Shares eligibility periods are 12 months in length. To ensure 12-month eligibility periods, restrictions have been put in place to limit an early renewal for Wisconsin Shares to no earlier than the 11th month and only to align with another assistance program such as Medicaid or FoodShare is due for renewal. A family may choose to align renewal dates for all assistance programs. Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 201.036(4)

- b. Describe and provide the citation for each of the minimum required elements listed below that are included in the Lead Agency’s definition of “temporary change”.

| Minimum Required Element | Citation |
|---|---|
| <p>[x] i. Any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness. Describe or define your Lead Agency’s policy: Temporary break means an individual's time-limited absence from an authorized activity due to illness, leave to care for an individual's family member.</p> | <p>Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(1)(cm)</p> |
| <p>[x] ii. Any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working. Describe or define your Lead Agency’s policy: Temporary break means an interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working between regular industry work seasons.</p> | <p>Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(1)(cm)</p> |
| <p>[x] iii. Any student holiday or break for a parent participating in a training or educational program. Describe or define your Lead Agency’s policy: Temporary break means a student or holiday break</p> | <p>Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(1)(cm)</p> |

| Minimum Required Element | Citation |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| [x] iv. Any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending a training or educational program. Describe or define your Lead Agency’s policy: Temporary Break means the cessation of an authorized activity as long as the individual continues to be employed or enrolled in the authorized activity and the absence does not exceed three months. | Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(1)(cm) |
| [x] v. Any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program that does not exceed 3 months or a longer period of time established by the Lead Agency. Describe or define your Lead Agency’s policy: Temporary break means any other cessation of an authorized activity as long as the individual continues to be employed or enrolled in the authorized activity and the absence does not exceed three months. | Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(1)(cm) |
| [x] vi. A child turning 13 years old during the minimum 12-month eligibility period (except as described in 3.1.1). Describe or define your Lead Agency’s policy: An individual does not lose eligibility for a child care subsidy for a child who attains the age of 13 until the department or the county department or agency redetermines the individual's eligibility. | Wis. Stat. s. 49.155(1)(cm) |
| [x] vii. Any changes in residency within the state, territory, or tribal service area. Describe or define your Lead Agency’s policy: An eligibility renewal date is not reset when a case transfers to a different county. | Wisconsin Shares Handbook Section 1.8 |

c. Provide any other elements included in the state’s definition of “temporary change”, including those implemented during the pandemic, and provide the citation.

If a parent is absent or expected to be absent from their approved activity for less than 30 calendar days, they are still considered to be actively participating in their approved activity. A gap of less than 30 calendar days does not need to be evaluated for either a permanent or temporary change status; the parent’s approved activity status would remain the same. Wisconsin Shares Handbook Section 1.3.9.2.

3.4.2 Assistance during the minimum 12-month eligibility period

Continuing assistance for “job search” and a Lead Agency’s option to discontinue assistance during the minimum 12-month eligibility period.

Lead Agencies have the option, but are not required, to discontinue assistance during the minimum 12-month eligibility period due to a parent’s non-temporary loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program, otherwise known as a parent’s eligible activity.

If the Lead Agency chooses the option to discontinue assistance due to a parent’s non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity, it must continue assistance at least at the same level for a period of not fewer than 3 months after each such loss or cessation. This time period allows the parent to engage in a job search and to resume work or resume attendance in a job training or educational program. At the end of the minimum 3-month period of continued assistance, if the parent has engaged in a qualifying work, training, or educational program activity with an income below 85 percent of state median income

(SMI), assistance cannot be terminated, and the child must continue receiving assistance until the next scheduled redetermination or, at the Lead Agency option, for an additional minimum 12-month eligibility period.

a. Does the Lead Agency consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) an eligible activity at initial eligibility determination (at application) and at the minimum 12-month eligibility redetermination? (Note: If yes, Lead Agencies must provide a minimum of three months of job search.)

No

Yes. If yes, describe the policy or procedure (including any differences in eligibility at initial eligibility determination vs. redetermination of eligibility):

N/A

b. Does the Lead Agency discontinue assistance during the minimum 12-month eligibility period due to a parent's non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity and offer a minimum 3-month period to allow parents to engage in a job search and to resume participation in an eligible activity?

No, the state/territory does not discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent's *non-temporary* loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program.

Yes, the Lead Agency discontinues assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent's *non-temporary* loss of work or cessation of eligible activity and provides a minimum 3-month period of job search. If yes:

i. Provide a summary describing the Lead Agency's policies and procedures for discontinuing assistance due to a parent's non-temporary change:

The Lead Agency exercises the option to terminate assistance prior to the 12-month eligibility redetermination and allows a three-month approved activity search period to re-engage in another approved activity. This period may last up to three months. If the non-temporary loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or education program occurs any time after the ninth month of the eligibility period, the authorization period will be allowed to continue until the scheduled redetermination. At that point, eligibility would be terminated if the family is not working or engaged in another approved activity.

ii. Describe what specific actions/changes trigger the job-search period after each such loss or cessation:

Parent reporting s/he is no longer engaged in an approved activity, a reported job loss, or failure to provide employment verification.

iii. How long is the job-search period (must be at least 3 months)?

The approved activity search will last up to three months.

iv. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program Policy Manual Section 1.4.10 Approved Activity Search Periods; Wis. Statutes, s.49.155(1m)(a).

c. The Lead Agency may discontinue assistance prior to the next minimum 12-month redetermination in the following limited circumstances. Check and describe any circumstances in which the Lead Agency chooses to discontinue assistance prior to the next

minimum 12-month redetermination. Check all that apply.

i. Not applicable

ii. Excessive unexplained absences despite multiple attempts by the Lead Agency or designated entity to contact the family and provider, including the prior notification of a possible discontinuation of assistance.

A. Define the number of unexplained absences identified as excessive:

Excessive unexplained absence is defined as no attendance by the child for the 30 previous days when the provision of child care services was expected by the child care provider, based on the agreement between the provider and the parent, and the parent has not contacted the provider to explain the child's absence. The parent's eligibility for Wisconsin Shares will continue but the parent's subsidy will be ended if the agency cannot reach the parent after multiple attempts.

B. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure:

Wis. Admin. Code DCF s. 201.039(2r)

iii. A change in residency outside of the state, territory, or tribal service area. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure:

Wisconsin residency is a condition of eligibility per Wis. Statutes, s.49.145(2)(d). All changes that may affect eligibility must be reported to the local agency within 10 days after the change per Wis. Statutes, s.49.145(2)(m).

iv. Substantiated fraud or intentional program violations that invalidate prior determinations of eligibility. Describe the violations that lead to discontinued assistance and provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

The following are Client Intentional Program Violations (IPVs): misrepresentation of income, misrepresentation of household composition, misrepresentation of child care needs, misrepresentation of residency, misrepresentation of participation in an approved activity, selling access to a subsidy account (trafficking), providing false or fraudulent documentation, misrepresentation of hardship need, using child care subsidy (as a client) to pay themselves as a provider, providing false identification or Social Security Number (SSN). Assistance can also be discontinued for a client's collusion with a child care provider to defraud the Wisconsin Shares program. The Lead Agency denies subsidy funds for the following durations: six months for a first violation, 12 months for a second violation, and permanent suspension from the Wisconsin Shares program for a third violation. The information on client IPVs is located in Wis. Statutes, s. 49.151(2) and the Wisconsin Shares Handbook Section 4.5.4.3 and 4.5.4.3.2. The violations that lead to discontinued assistance are listed in 4.5.4.3.5.

3.4.3 Change reporting during the minimum 12-month eligibility period

The Lead Agency must describe the requirements for parents to report changes in circumstances during the 12-month eligibility period and describe efforts to ensure that such requirements do not place an undue burden on eligible families, which could impact the continuity of care for children and stability for families receiving CCDF services (98.21 (e)).

Note: Responses should exclude reporting requirements for a graduated phase-out, which were described in question 3.2.5 b.

Families are required to report a change to the Lead Agency at any time during the 12-month

eligibility period if the family's income exceeds 85 percent of the state median income, taking into account irregular fluctuations in income (98.21(e)(1)). If the Lead Agency chooses the option to terminate assistance, as described in section 3.4.2 of the Plan, they may require families to report a non-temporary change in work, training or educational activities (otherwise known as a parent's eligible activity).

a. Does the Lead Agency require families to report a non-temporary change in a parent's eligible activity?

No

Yes

b. Any additional reporting requirements during the minimum 12-month eligibility period must be limited to items that impact a family's eligibility (e.g., income changes over 85 percent of state median income (SMI)) or that impact the Lead Agency's ability to contact the family or pay the child care providers (e.g., a family's change of address, a change in the parent's choice of child care provider).

Check and describe any additional reporting requirements required by the Lead Agency during the minimum 12-month eligibility period. Check all that apply.

i. Additional changes that may impact a family's eligibility during the minimum 12-month period. Describe:

In addition to temporary and non-temporary changes in the approved activity, parents are required to report any change that may affect eligibility. Such changes include: an increase in gross income that exceeds \$250 per month, the parent is participating in a different approved activity, a member of the assistance group gets married or divorced, or the composition of the assistance group changes.

ii. Changes that impact the Lead Agency's ability to contact the family. Describe:

Parents are required to report a change in residence or a change in mailing address within ten days after the change.

iii. Changes that impact the Lead Agency's ability to pay child care providers. Describe:

Parents are required to report if the number of days or hours that the assistance group needs child care has changed from what was previously provided to the child care administrative agency and if the child care provider charges the parent a reduced price. The parent must report by the last business day of the month if they intend to change providers for the following month.

c. Any additional reporting requirements that the Lead Agency chooses to require from parents during the minimum 12-month eligibility period, shall not require an additional office visit. In addition, the Lead Agency must offer a range of notification options to accommodate families. How does the Lead Agency allow families to report changes to ensure that reporting requirements are not burdensome and to avoid an impact on continued eligibility between redeterminations? Check all that apply.

i. Phone

ii. Email

iii. Online forms

iv. Extended submission hours

v. Postal mail

vi. Fax

vii. In-person submission

viii. Other. Describe:

Families are able to report eligibility changes online using (<https://access.wisconsin.gov/access/>) <https://access.wisconsin.gov/access/> and are able to report changes in child care hours or a change of

child care provider through the web-based Child Care Parent Portal.

d. Families must have the option to voluntarily report changes on an ongoing basis during the minimum 12-month eligibility period.

Lead Agencies are required to act on information reported by the family if it will reduce the family's co-payment or increase the family's subsidy. Lead Agencies are prohibited from acting on information reported by the family that would reduce the family's subsidy unless the information reported indicates that the family's income exceeds 85 percent of SMI after considering irregular fluctuations in income or, at the option of the Lead Agency, the family has experienced a non-temporary change in eligible activity.

- i. Describe any other changes that the Lead Agency allows families to report.
Parents are not required to report decreases in monthly household income; however, doing so may increase a family's subsidy amount by reducing the hourly copayment per the reduction in income.
- ii. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure.

Wisconsin Shares Handbook Section 1.8.1 Reporting Requirements.

3.4.4 Prevent the disruption of employment, education, or job training activities

Lead Agencies are required to have procedures and policies in place to ensure that parents (especially parents receiving assistance under the TANF program) are not required to unduly disrupt their employment, education, or job training activities to comply with the Lead Agency's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility for assistance (658E(c)(2)(N)(ii); 98.21(d)).

Examples include developing strategies to inform families and their providers of an upcoming redetermination and the information that will be required of the family, pre-populating subsidy renewal forms, having parents confirm that the information is accurate, and/or asking only for the information necessary to make an eligibility redetermination. In addition, states and territories can offer a variety of family-friendly methods for submitting documentation for eligibility redetermination that considers the range of needs for families in accessing support (e.g., use of languages other than English, access to transportation, accommodation of parents working non-traditional hours).

a. Identify, where applicable, the Lead Agency's procedures and policies to ensure that parents (especially parents receiving TANF program funds) do not have their employment, education, or job training unduly disrupted to comply with the state/territory's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility. Check all that apply.

- i. Advance notice to parents of pending redetermination
- ii. Advance notice to providers of pending redetermination
- iii. Pre-populated subsidy renewal form
- iv. Online documentation submission
- v. Cross-program redeterminations
- vi. Extended office hours (evenings and/or weekends)
- vii. Consultation available via phone
- viii. Other:

All families are able to apply or renew benefits by phone, in person, or online through (<https://access.wisconsin.gov/access/>) <https://access.wisconsin.gov/access/>. Parents can also

complete early renewals to align with other programs. If parents lose eligibility due to not completing a renewal, they can complete a late renewal within 30 calendar days without having to reapply. Families are able to submit verification items by fax, email, mail, or may drop items off at the local agency. Parents may upload verification documents through ACCESS or the MyWICChildCare Parent Portal. Parents can add schedule changes and request new authorizations through the MyWICChildCare Parent Portal as well.

4 Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Children

A core purpose of CCDF is to promote parental choice and to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care services that best suit their family's needs. Parents have the option to choose from center-based care, family child care, or care provided in the child's own home. In supporting parental choice, the Lead Agencies must ensure that families receiving CCDF funding have the opportunity to choose from the full range of eligible child care settings and must provide families with equal access to child care that is comparable to that of non-CCDF families. Lead Agencies must employ strategies to increase the supply and to improve the quality of child care services, especially in underserved areas. In addition to generally building the supply of child care for all families, this effort also supports equal access for CCDF eligible children to the priced child care market.

This section addresses strategies that the Lead Agency uses to promote parental choice, ensure equal access, and increase the supply of child care. Note: In responding to questions in this section, the Office of Child Care (OCC) recognizes that each state/territory identifies and defines its own categories and types of care. The OCC does not expect states/territories to change their definitions to fit the CCDF-defined categories and types of care. For these questions, provide responses that closely match the CCDF categories of care.

Note: When asked for citations, responses can include state statute, regulations, administrative rules, policy manuals or policy issuances. See the Introduction on page 4 for more detail.

4.1 Maximize Parental Choice and Implement Supply Building Mechanisms

The parent(s) of each eligible child who receive(s) or is offered financial assistance for child care services has the option of either receiving a child care certificate or, if available, enrolling their child with a provider that has a grant or contract for providing child care services (658E(c)(2)(A); 98.30(a)). Even if a parent chooses to enroll their child with a provider who has a grant or contract, the parent will select the provider, to the extent practicable. If a parent chooses to use a certificate, the Lead Agency shall provide information to the parent on the range of provider options, including care by sectarian providers and relatives. Lead Agencies must require providers chosen by families to meet health and safety standards and has the option to require higher standards of quality. Lead Agencies are reminded that any policies and procedures should not restrict parental access to any type of care or provider (e.g. center care, home care, in-home care, for-profit provider, non-profit provider, or faith-based provider, etc.) (98.15 (a)(5)).

4.1.1 Child care certificate

Describe the child care certificate, including when it is issued to parents (before or after the parent has selected a provider) and what information is included on the certificate (98.16 (q)).

The Lead Agency authorizes child care by creating an authorization in the automated system and funds are loaded to the parent’s Electronic Benefit Transaction (EBT) card each month. An authorization is created after the parent selects a provider. An authorization notice is sent to parents after the authorization is written. The authorization notice informs parents of the monthly authorized hours for the next three months and any additional authorized hours the parent requested for times that school is expected to be closed. The quarterly authorization notice contains the child’s name, monthly subsidy amount, and the months in that quarter for which the child has an authorization. The authorization notice also includes the name of the provider, provider number, and provider location. The authorization notice lists reporting requirements; provides information regarding overpayments, recoupments, and sanctions; informs parents that subsidy funds will drop off if not used within 90 days; and provides information regarding appeal rights.

4.1.2 Child care certificate and parent choice

Identify how the parent is informed that the child care certificate allows the option to choose from a variety of child care categories, such as private, not-for-profit, faith-based providers; centers; FCC homes; or in-home providers (658E(c)(2)(A)(i); 658P(2); 658Q). Check all that apply.

- a. Certificate provides information about the choice of providers
- b. Certificate provides information about the quality of providers
- c. Certificate is not linked to a specific provider, so parents can choose any provider
- d. Consumer education materials are provided on choosing child care
- e. Referrals provided to child care resource and referral agencies
- f. Co-located resource and referral staff in eligibility offices
- g. Verbal communication at the time of the application
- h. Community outreach, workshops, or other in-person activities
- i. Other. Describe:

During the authorization process, parents are informed by the local agency worker of their responsibility to select a child care provider, and they are provided with consumer education materials and information about the Lead Agency's Child Care Finder website and resources available through CCR&Rs. Parents may select any child care provider who is participating in Wisconsin’s quality rating system, which includes private, non-for-profit, faith-based providers, centers, FCC homes, and in-home providers.

4.1.3 Equal access for families receiving CCDF-funded child care

A core principle of CCDF is that families receiving CCDF-funded child care should have equal access to child care that is comparable to that of non-CCDF families (658E(c)(4)(A) and 98.45(a)).

- a. Describe how parents have access to the full range of providers eligible to receive CCDF:
Parents may select any child care provider who is participating in the Lead Agency’s quality rating system, which includes private, non-for-profit, faith-based providers, centers, FCC homes, and in-home providers with the goal to ensure Wisconsin children and families, including rural and vulnerable populations, will have equitable access to early care and education programs that meet their needs.☐

b. Describe state data on the extent to which eligible child care providers participate in the CCDF system:

Of the 4,539 regulated providers in Wisconsin, there are 3,724 providers who are participating in the YoungStar quality rating system and eligible to receive CCDF-funded child care subsidy payments.

c. Identify any barriers to provider participation, including barriers related to payment rates and practices – including for family child care and in-home providers - based on provider feedback and reports to the Lead Agency:

Barriers include low reimbursement rates, a two-touch eligibility and authorization system, insufficient number of high-quality providers that meet the needs of families. Moreover, Wisconsin statutes do not allow purchasing slots via contracts/grants.

4.1.4 Procedures to ensuring unlimited access

Certify by describing the Lead Agency's procedures for ensuring that parents have unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds (658E(c)(2)(B); 98.16(t)).

The Wis. Admin. Code DCF 250 Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Centers and DCF 251 Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers state in sections 250.04 (4) (a) and in 251.04 (4) (b) that the center shall permit parents to visit and observe the center's operations at any time during the center's hours of operation unless parental access is prohibited or restricted by a court order. In addition, sections 250.04 (4) (b) and 251.04 (4) (e) state that the center shall provide a summary of this chapter (DCF 250 or DCF 251) to the parents of each child upon the child's enrollment. Also, section 251.04 (4) (f) states that a copy of this administrative code chapter shall be posted or available in an area where parents are likely to see it. Further, the Lead Agency publishes "Your Guide to Regulated Child Care: Your Summary of the Child Care Rules", which serves as the summary that centers distribute to parents. One item on this checklist educates parents to ask providers if parental visits, whether announced or unannounced, are welcome at any time. Certification administrative rules located in Chapter 202 require providers to communicate with parents that they are allowed to visit and observe their children in the provider's care at any time per 202.08(12)(a).

4.1.5 Allowing and limiting in-home care

The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care (i.e., care provided in the child's own home) but may limit its use (98.16(i)(2)). Will the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?
 No

Yes. If checked, what limits will the Lead Agency set on the use of in-home care? Check all that apply.

a. Restricted based on the minimum number of children in the care of the provider to meet the Fair Labor Standards Act (minimum wage) requirements. Describe:

Wisconsin Shares policy allows the base subsidy amount to be adjusted to minimum wage minus the copayment amount when the in-home care provider is caring for children for 15 or more hours per week.

b. Restricted based on the provider meeting a minimum age requirement.

Describe:

An in-home care provider must be 18 years of age or older.

c. Restricted based on the hours of care (i.e., certain number of hours, non-traditional work hours). Describe:

Wisconsin Shares policy allows child care to be authorized to an in-home provider when no other care is available, such as second or third shift hours and weekend care, if no other care is available within a reasonable geographic area.

d. Restricted to care by relatives. (A relative provider must be at least 18 years of age based on the definition of eligible child care provider (98.2)). Describe:

N/A

e. Restricted to care for children with special needs or a medical condition.

Describe:

Wisconsin Shares policy allows a child with a special need to be cared for by an in-home child care provider if the child's needs are best met in their own home.

f. Restricted to in-home providers that meet additional health and safety requirements beyond those required by CCDF. Describe:

In-home child care providers must be certified.

g. Other. Describe:

N/A

4.1.6 Child care services available through grants or contracts.

a. In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency provide child care services through grants or contracts for child care slots (658A(b)(1))? Note: Do not check “yes” if every provider is simply required to sign an agreement to be paid in the certificate program.

No. If no, skip to 4.1.7

Yes, in some jurisdictions but not statewide. If yes, describe how many jurisdictions use grants or contracts for child care slots.

N/A

Yes, statewide. If yes, describe:

i. How the Lead Agency ensures that parents who enroll with a provider who has a grant or contract have choices when selecting a provider:

The Lead Agency’s contract with United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) specifies that parents may choose any provider who is eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares. The Lead Agency is statutorily prohibited from contracting with other types of providers or agencies for child care slots.

ii. The entities that receive contracts (e.g., shared services alliances, CCR&R agencies, FCC networks, community-based agencies, child care providers) and how grants or contracts are promoted by the Lead Agency:

The Lead Agency contracts with UMOS, a non-profit organization that provides child care services to children of migrant farm workers throughout the state. UMOS contracts with local area child care providers to provide services during times when UMOS centers are not available.

iii. How rates for contracted slots are set through grants and contracts and if they are viewed by providers as a vehicle for stabilizing payments.

UMOS uses the Wisconsin Shares Maximum Rates to determine the payment to providers.

b. Will the Lead Agency use grants or contracts for direct child care services to increase the supply or quality of specific types of care?

No

Yes. If yes, does the Lead Agency use grants or contracts to increase the supply and/or quality of child care programs serving the populations below? Check all that apply.

| <i>Grants or Contracts are used in Child Care Programs that Serve</i> | <i>To increase the supply of care</i> | <i>To increase the quality of care</i> |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| i. Children with disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ii. Infants and toddlers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iii. School-age children | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| iv. Children needing non-traditional hour care | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| v. Children experiencing homelessness | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vi. Children with diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| vii. Children in underserved areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| viii. Children in urban areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ix. Children in rural areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| x. Other populations, please specify Migrant farmworkers: The Lead Agency contracts with United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), a non-profit organization that provides child care services to children of migrant farm workers throughout the state. UMOS contracts with local area child care providers to provide services during times when UMOS centers are not available. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

4.1.7 Shortages in supply of high-quality child care

Lead Agencies must identify shortages in the supply of high-quality child care providers that meet parents’ needs and preferences. List the data sources used to identify any shortages and declines in the supply of care types that meet parents’ needs. Also describe the method of tracking progress to support equal access and parental choice (98.16(x)).

a. In child care centers.

The Lead Agency combines four data sources to regularly assess shortages in equitable access to

high-quality ECE providers: information on quality rating outcomes from YoungStar, Wisconsin's QRIS; information on capacity, hours, ages served, and language(s) used from Lead Agency's Child Care Regulation data system; child demographic information on children attending regulated programs through the Wisconsin Shares subsidy system; and child population data from the US Census Bureau. With all this information combined, the Lead Agency determines the need for care in a specific zip code (US Census Bureau combined with estimated percentage of young children who have all available parents in the workforce) versus the capacity for care (regulation data) in that same zip code. The Lead Agency then maps out this information, using the term child care desert for any zip code whose need for care is three or more times greater than its capacity for care. It further breaks down and analyzes this information by adding filters. With filters, it can: Compare infant/toddler care need (US Census Bureau information combined with estimated percentage of infants/toddlers who have all available parents in the workforce) with capacity of programs that serve infants and toddlers, by zip code; Compare overall or infant/toddler care need with the capacity of programs available, by star rating or by quality indicator met/not met status; Look at how/if demographics of currently enrolled children from families using the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program vary by star rating or by quality indicator met/not met status; Compare capacity of programming available for children who speak a language other than English versus the need for multilingual care (US Census Bureau). By utilizing data visualization software (Tableau and ArcGIS), the Lead Agency can regularly update data to note changes in access to high-quality care, by child age, by zip code, by multilingual status, and more.

b. In child care homes.

The Lead Agency combines four data sources to regularly assess shortages in equitable access to high-quality ECE in licensed child care homes: information on quality rating outcomes from YoungStar, Wisconsin's QRIS; information on capacity, hours, ages served, and language(s) used from Lead Agency's Child Care Regulation data system; child demographic information on children attending regulated programs through the Wisconsin Shares subsidy system; and child population data from the US Census Bureau. With all this information combined, the Lead Agency determines the need for care in a specific zip code (US Census Bureau combined with estimated percentage of young children who have all available parents in the workforce) versus the capacity for care (regulation data) in that same zip code. The Lead Agency then maps out this information, using the term child care desert for any zip code whose need for care is three or more times greater than its capacity for care. It further breaks down and analyzes this information by adding filters. The filter for program regulation type allows the Lead Agency to look at capacity specifically in licensed child care homes.

c. Other.

In addition to licensed group and family child care programs, the Lead Agency's data systems include the same level of information on certified family child care providers and license-exempt school age programs. The Lead Agency can use the program regulation type filter to look at capacity in licensed group, licensed family, certified family, and license-exempt public-school programs.

4.1.8 Strategies to increase the supply of and improve the quality of child care services

Lead Agencies are required to develop and implement strategies to increase the supply of and improve the quality of child care services (98.16 (x)). These strategies should address children in underserved areas; infants and toddlers; children with disabilities, as defined by the Lead Agency; and children who receive care during non-traditional hours. Identify what method(s) is (are) used to increase supply and/or to improve quality for the following populations and indicate in the description if a strategy is focused more on building supply or

on improving quality.

Amended: Effective Date 02/09/2023

a. Children in underserved areas. Check and describe all that apply.

i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe:

Migrant farmworkers: The Lead Agency contracts with United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS), a non-profit organization that provides child care services to children of migrant farm workers throughout the state. UMOS contracts with local area child care providers to provide services during times when UMOS centers are not available. Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from local, regulated child care providers. Workforce and Community Innovation Grants to communities seeking to stabilize funding for existing early care and education and in some cases, increase availability of early care and education through public-private partnerships continue to be available.

ii. Targeted Family Child Care Support such as Family Child Care Networks. Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from local, regulated child care providers. Workforce and Community Innovation Grants to communities seeking to stabilize funding for existing early care and education and in some cases, increase availability of early care and education through public-private partnerships continue to be available.

iii. Start-up funding. Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funding, technology (devices), Shared Services Networks will be expanded, and accessible training on business practices will be available to support new child care providers.

iv. Technical assistance support. Describe:

Comprehensive, equity-focused training and technical assistance from the quality, regulation, and business perspectives will be available. Through the QRIS, the Lead Agency ensures that all providers serving children from families participating in the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program have access to a minimum of ten hours per year of onsite, program-specific technical assistance. Finally, ECE professionals who work for programs operating in the zip code with the state's highest poverty rate have access to free credit-based courses, free high-quality materials, and additional technical assistance around developmentally appropriate interactions and environments.

v. Recruitment of providers. Describe:

Through the CCR&R and YoungStar contracts, the Lead Agency funds local efforts to recruit a diverse, high-quality workforce in areas where families lack access to local early care and education that meets their needs. Significant recruitment and retention efforts are underway to attract and retain diverse providers and educators, including financial incentives. This is a primary focus for the Lead Agency.

vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe:

Through Lead Agency funds, families residing in the zip code with the state's highest poverty rate are provided with additional subsidy funds to support their ability to access higher quality care at an affordable rate. Children with disabilities may also receive a rate increase in their subsidy payment.

vii. Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, and shared services. Describe:

The Lead Agency funds WECA to implement the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (license holder of the CCA for Social Good shared resources platform), whose primary goal is to ensure that their ECE members have stable, profitable businesses so that providers can focus on quality care.

viii. Accreditation supports. Describe:

Through the YoungStar contract, the Lead Agency also funds technical assistance around accreditation standards, available to all participating providers.

ix. Child care health consultation. Describe:

The Lead Agency piloted health consultation services with regulators in 2020. This work will expand in the future.

x. Mental health consultation. Describe:

Training and coaching is available statewide. Consultation services are being piloted in identified communities. Additionally, mental health consultation is included in the ECAC recommendations to the Governor.

xi. Other. Describe:

N/A

b. Infants and toddlers. Check and describe all that apply.

i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from local, regulated child care providers. The Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITTP) is advocating for this strategy. Currently, Wisconsin statutes do not allow the Lead Agency to provide grants or contracts to purchase slots.

ii. Family Child Care Networks. Describe:

Describe: Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from local, regulated child care providers. The Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITTP) is advocating for this strategy. Currently, Wisconsin statutes do not allow the Lead Agency to provide grants or contracts to purchase slots.

iii. Start-up funding. Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funding, technology (devices), Shared Services Networks will be expanded, and accessible training on business practices will be available to support new child care providers.

iv. Technical assistance support. Describe:

The Lead Agency offers free onsite technical assistance to all YoungStar participating child care providers. Training and resources specific to the needs of infants are available through the local YoungStar office/CCR&R. The Lead Agency collaborates with WI-AIMH to provide mental health consultation services, resources, and professional development opportunities to child care providers serving children birth through three years of age.

v. Recruitment of providers. Describe:

Through the CCR&R and YoungStar contracts, the Lead Agency funds local efforts to recruit a diverse, high-quality workforce in areas where access is least available.

vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe:

Through Lead Agency funds, families residing in the zip code with the highest poverty rate are provided with additional subsidy funds to support their ability to access higher quality care at an affordable rate. The subsidy is universally paid at a higher rate for children under the age of three and children with disabilities.

vii. Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, and shared services. Describe:

The Lead Agency funds WECA to implement the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (license holder of the CCA for Social Good shared resources platform), whose primary goal is to ensure that their ECE members have stable, profitable businesses so that providers can focus on quality care.

viii. Accreditation supports. Describe:

Through the YoungStar contract, the Lead Agency funds technical assistance around accreditation standards that is available to all participating providers.

ix. Child care health consultation. Describe:

The Lead Agency piloted health consultation services with regulators in 2020. This work will expand in the future.

x. Mental health consultation. Describe:

Training and coaching is available statewide. Consultation services are being piloted in identified communities. Additionally, mental health consultation is included in the ECAC recommendations to the Governor.

xi. Other. Describe:

N/A

c. Children with disabilities. Check and describe all that apply.

i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from local, regulated child care providers. The Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITTP) is advocating for this strategy. Currently, Wisconsin statutes do not allow the Lead Agency to provide grants or contracts to purchase slots.

ii. Family Child Care Networks. Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from local, regulated child care providers. The Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITTP) is advocating for this strategy. Currently, Wisconsin statutes do not allow the Lead Agency to provide grants or contracts to purchase slots.

iii. Start-up funding. Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funding, technology (devices), Shared Services Networks will be expanded, and accessible training on business practices will be available to support new child care providers. .

iv. Technical assistance support. Describe:

Comprehensive, equity-focused training and technical assistance from the quality, regulation, and business perspectives will be available. Through the QRIS, the Lead Agency ensures that all providers serving children from families participating in the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program have access to a minimum of ten hours per year of onsite, program-specific technical assistance. Finally, ECE professionals who work for programs operating in the zip code with the state's highest poverty rate have access to free credit-based courses, free high-quality materials, and additional technical assistance around developmentally appropriate interactions and environments.

v. Recruitment of providers. Describe:

Through the CCR&R and YoungStar contracts, the Lead Agency funds local efforts to recruit a diverse, high-quality workforce in areas where families lack access to local early care and education that meets their needs. Significant recruitment and retention efforts are underway to attract and retain diverse providers and educators, including financial incentives. This is a primary focus for the Lead Agency.

vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe:

Through Lead Agency funds, families residing in the zip code with the highest poverty rate are provided with additional subsidy funds to support their ability to access higher quality care at an affordable rate. The subsidy is universally paid at a higher rate for children under the age of three and children with disabilities.

vii. Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, and shared services. Describe:

The Lead Agency funds WECA to implement the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (license holder of the CCA for Social Good shared resources platform), whose primary goal is to ensure that their ECE members have stable, profitable businesses so that providers can focus on quality care.

viii. Accreditation supports. Describe:

Through the YoungStar contract, the Lead Agency funds technical assistance around accreditation standards that is available to all participating providers.

ix. Child care health consultation. Describe:

The Lead Agency piloted health consultation services with regulators in 2020. This work will expand in the future.

x. Mental health consultation. Describe:

The Lead Agency collaborates with WI-AIMH and other stakeholders to develop and pilot the use of infant and early childhood mental health consultants within early care and education programs. A pilot program is being implemented in two areas within the state, one rural and one urban, to test the efficacy and need for mental health consultation within ECE programs. The Lead Agency is also collaborating with the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health Collective Impact workgroup to design a package that would support the creation of an infant and early childhood mental health consultation workforce. The package addresses the scaling up of the current pilot programs to meet the needs of the entire state.

xi. Other. Describe:

N/A

d. Children who receive care during non-traditional hours. Check and describe all that apply.

i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from local, regulated child care providers. The Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITTP) is advocating for this strategy. Currently, Wisconsin statutes do not allow the Lead Agency to provide grants or contracts to purchase slots.

ii. Family Child Care Networks. Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from local, regulated child care providers. The Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITTP) is advocating for this strategy. Currently, Wisconsin statutes do not allow the Lead Agency to provide grants or contracts to purchase slots.

iii. Start-up funding. Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funding, technology (devices), Shared Services Networks will be expanded, and accessible training on business practices will be available to support new child care

providers. .

iv. Technical assistance support. Describe:

Comprehensive, equity-focused training and technical assistance from the quality, regulation, and business perspectives will be available. Through the QRIS, the Lead Agency ensures that all providers serving children from families participating in the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program have access to a minimum of ten hours per year of onsite, program-specific technical assistance. Finally, ECE professionals who work for programs operating in the zip code with the state's highest poverty rate have access to free credit-based courses, free high-quality materials, and additional technical assistance around developmentally appropriate interactions and environments.

v. Recruitment of providers. Describe:

Through the CCR&R and YoungStar contracts, the Lead Agency funds local efforts to recruit a diverse, high-quality workforce in areas where families lack access to local early care and education that meets their needs. Significant recruitment and retention efforts are underway to attract and retain diverse providers and educators, including financial incentives. This is a primary focus for the Lead Agency.

vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe:

Through Lead Agency funds, families residing in the zip code with the highest poverty rate are provided with additional subsidy funds to support their ability to access higher quality care at an affordable rate. The subsidy is universally paid at a higher rate for children under the age of three and children with disabilities.

vii. Support for improving business practices for providers, such as management training, and shared services. Describe:

The Lead Agency funds WECA to implement the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (license holder of the CCA for Social Good shared resources platform), whose primary goal is to ensure that their ECE members have stable, profitable businesses so that providers can focus on quality care.

viii. Accreditation supports. Describe:

Through the YoungStar contract, the Lead Agency funds technical assistance around accreditation standards that is available to all participating providers.

ix. Child Care health consultation. Describe:

The Lead Agency piloted health consultation services with regulators in 2020. This work will expand in the future.

x. Mental health consultation. Describe:

The Lead Agency collaborates with WI-AIMH and other stakeholders to develop and pilot the use of infant and early childhood mental health consultants within early care and education programs. A pilot program is being implemented in two areas within the state, one rural and one urban, to test the efficacy and need for mental health consultation within ECE programs. The Lead Agency is also collaborating with the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health Collective Impact workgroup to design a package that would support the creation of an infant and early childhood mental health consultation workforce. The package addresses the scaling up of the current pilot programs to meet the needs of the entire state.

xi. Other. Describe:

N/A

e. Other. Check and describe all that apply.

i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from

local, regulated child care providers. The Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITTP) is advocating for this strategy. Currently, Wisconsin statutes do not allow the Lead Agency to provide grants or contracts to purchase slots.

[x] ii. Family Child Care Networks. Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funds, the Lead Agency is exploring businesses purchasing slots from local, regulated child care providers. The Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project (WITTP) is advocating for this strategy. Currently, Wisconsin statutes do not allow the Lead Agency to provide grants or contracts to purchase slots.

[x] iii. Start-up funding. Describe:

Using CCDBG CRRSA funding, technology (devices), Shared Services Networks will be expanded, and accessible training on business practices will be available to support new child care providers. .

[x] iv. Technical assistance support. Describe:

Comprehensive, equity-focused training and technical assistance from the quality, regulation, and business perspectives will be available. Through the QRIS, the Lead Agency ensures that all providers serving children from families participating in the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program have access to a minimum of ten hours per year of onsite, program-specific technical assistance. Finally, ECE professionals who work for programs operating in the zip code with the state's highest poverty rate have access to free credit-based courses, free high-quality materials, and additional technical assistance around developmentally appropriate interactions and environments.

[x] v. Recruitment of providers. Describe:

Through the CCR&R and YoungStar contracts, the Lead Agency funds local efforts to recruit a diverse, high-quality workforce in areas where families lack access to local early care and education that meets their needs. Significant recruitment and retention efforts are underway to attract and retain diverse providers and educators, including financial incentives. This is a primary focus for the Lead Agency.

[x] vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe:

Through Lead Agency funds, families residing in the zip code with the highest poverty rate are provided with additional subsidy funds to support their ability to access higher quality care at an affordable rate. The subsidy is universally paid at a higher rate for children under the age of three and children with disabilities.

[x] vii. Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, and shared services. Describe:

The Lead Agency funds WECA to implement the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (license holder of the CCA for Social Good shared resources platform), whose primary goal is to ensure that their ECE members have stable, profitable businesses so that providers can focus on quality care.

[x] viii. Accreditation supports. Describe:

Through the YoungStar contract, the Lead Agency funds technical assistance around accreditation standards that is available to all participating providers.

[x] ix. Child Care health consultation. Describe:

The Lead Agency piloted health consultation services with regulators in 2020. This work will expand in the future.

x. Mental health consultation. Describe:

The Lead Agency collaborates with WI-AIMH and other stakeholders to develop and pilot the use of infant and early childhood mental health consultants within early care and education programs. A pilot program is being implemented in two areas within the state, one rural and one urban, to test the efficacy and need for mental health consultation within ECE programs. The Lead Agency is also collaborating with the Wisconsin Office of Children's Mental Health Collective Impact workgroup to design a package that would support the creation of an infant and early childhood mental health consultation workforce. The package addresses the scaling up of the current pilot programs to meet the needs of the entire state.

xi. Other. Describe:

N/A

4.1.9 Prioritizing investments for increasing access to high-quality child care and development services

Lead Agencies must prioritize investments for increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and do not currently have sufficient numbers of such programs (658 E(c)(2)(M); 98.16 (x);98.46(b)).

a. How does the Lead Agency define areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment?

The Lead Agency uses the US census definition of concentration of poverty, which is any area where 40 percent of the tract population lives at or below the federal ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_thresholds_\(United_States_Census_Bureau\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_thresholds_(United_States_Census_Bureau))) poverty threshold. The Lead Agency does not define areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment; however, a pilot is underway to address child care needs in 53206-zip code through enhanced child care funding and additional high quality supports to providers.

b. Describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and that do not have access to high-quality programs.

The Lead Agency administers the Wisconsin Shares subsidy program to provide financial support for qualified families to access quality child care. Child care programs must participate in YoungStar in order to serve families who utilize Wisconsin Shares. YoungStar technical consultation is provided to increase program quality. The 53206-zip code in Milwaukee County has been identified as high-need and is receiving additional supports and services through the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/53206-initiative>) 53206 Early Care and Education Initiative. The Lead Agency contracts with local CCR&Rs and IHEs to provide professional development and financial support through a workforce pilot focused on increasing the educational level of early care and education professionals working in the 53206-zip code. The Lead Agency funded the creation of Early Learning Kits that provide quality materials to programs in this identified area. The local CCR&R provides targeted technical assistance to increase the quality of infant and toddler child care and to encourage active participation in YoungStar quality improvement services. The Lead Agency increased the financial support for families living in the 53206-zip code who utilize Wisconsin Shares and have children zero to three years of age. In focusing on the advancement of equity and inclusion, the Lead Agency will identify high-priority communities that have significant concentrations of poverty and

unemployment and lack of access to high-quality programs.

4.2 Assess Market Rates and Analyze the Cost of Child Care

Key principles of the CCDF are to: (1) provide equal access to child care for children receiving child care assistance; and (2) ensure parental choice by offering a full range of child care services. Payment rates that are too low to support equal access undermine these principles. To establish subsidy payment rates that ensure equal access, Lead Agencies collect and analyze data through a number of tools. Lead Agencies have the option to conduct a statistically valid and reliable (1) market rate survey (MRS) reflecting variations in the price to parents of child care services by geographic area, type of provider, and age of child or (2) an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, such as a cost estimation model (658E(c)(4)(B)). A cost estimation model estimates the cost of care by incorporating both data and assumptions to judge what expected costs would be incurred by child care providers and parents under different scenarios. Another approach would be a cost study that collects cost data at the facility or program level to measure the costs (or inputs used) to deliver child care services (CCDF-ACF-PI-2018-01).

Regardless of whether Lead Agencies conduct a market rate survey or an alternative methodology, they are required to analyze the cost of providing child services, known as the narrow cost analysis, that meet basic health, safety, quality and staffing requirements (base level care) (98.45(b)(3), (f)(1)(ii)(A), and (f)(2)(ii)), and higher-quality care at each level of quality, as defined by the Lead Agency (98.45(b)(4), (f)(1)(ii)(B), and (f)(2)(iii)). The analysis must identify the gaps between the cost of care and subsidy levels adopted by the state and then be considered as part of the rate setting process.

Note: Any Lead Agency considering using an alternative methodology, instead of a market rate survey, is required to submit a description of its proposed approach to its ACF Regional Child Care Program Office for pre-approval in advance of the Plan submittal (see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/ccdf-acf-pi-2016-08>). Advance approval is not required if the Lead Agency plans to implement both a market rate survey and an alternative methodology. In its request for ACF pre-approval, a Lead Agency must:

- Provide an overview of the Lead Agency's proposed approach (e.g., cost estimation model, cost study/survey, etc.), including a description of data sources.
- Describe what information the Lead Agency will obtain from an alternative methodology that could not be obtained from the required narrow cost analysis.
- Describe how the Lead Agency will consult with the State Early Childhood Advisory Council or similar coordinating body, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, organizations representing child care caregivers, teachers and directors, and other appropriate entities prior to conducting the identified alternative methodology.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will use methods that are statistically valid and reliable and will yield accurate results. For example, if using a survey, describe how the Lead Agency will ensure a representative sample and promote an adequate response rate. If using a cost estimation model, describe how the Lead Agency will validate the assumptions in the model.
- If the proposed alternative methodology includes an analysis of costs (e.g., cost estimation model or cost study/survey), describe how the alternative methodology will account for key factors that impact the cost of providing care, such as: staff salaries and benefits,

training and professional development, curricula and supplies, group size and ratios, enrollment levels, licensing requirements, quality level, facility size, and other factors.

- Describe how the alternative methodology will provide complete information that captures the universe of providers in the child care market.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will reflect variations by provider type, age of children, geographic location, and quality.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will use current data.
- What metrics the Lead Agency will use to set rates based on the alternative methodology.
- Describe the estimated reporting burden and cost to conduct the approach.

A Market Rate Survey (MRS) or an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology must be developed and conducted no earlier than 2 years before the date of submission of the Plan (658E(c)(4)(B)(i) (98.45 (c)). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lead Agencies may request a waiver for up to one additional year (until July 1, 2022) to complete the required MRS or an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. Lead Agencies may also request the required Narrow Cost Analysis be waived for one year (until July 1, 2022). These waiver requests must include a justification linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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4.2.1 Completion of the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology.

Did the state/territory conduct a statistically valid and reliable MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology?

Yes. If yes, please identify the methodology(ies) used below to assess child care prices and/or costs.

a. MRS. When was your data gathered (provide a date range, for instance, September – December, 2019)?

The Lead Agency conducted a comprehensive Narrow Cost Analysis and Market Rate Survey in Spring 2022. The data was obtained between 1/1/22 - 6/1/2022.

b. ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. Identify the date of the ACF approval and describe the methodology:

N/A

No, a waiver is being requested in Appendix A.

- a. Please identify the Lead Agency’s planned methodology(ies) to assess child care prices and/or costs.

i. MRS. If checked, describe the status of the Lead Agency’s implementation of the MRS.

The Lead Agency developed a new Narrow Cost Analysis and Market Rate Survey (MRS) to better understand the true cost of child care, which is often not what providers charge families and includes non-personnel expenses, workforce costs, and per child annual cost of care, at various levels of quality, DCF has completed an enhanced MRS

process that not only considers the market rate survey results but also includes a narrow cost analysis that captures additional cost information outside of the MRS.

[] ii. ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. If checked, describe the status of the Lead Agency's implementation of the ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, including if applicable, the date of the ACF approval and a description of the methodology:

- b. If a waiver is requested, Lead Agencies will need to respond to questions 4.2.2-4.5.2 based on data collected for the FY 2019-2021 CCDF Plan or any data collected since then. Identify the date of the Lead Agencies' most recent and complete Market Rate Survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology that will provide data to inform responses to questions 4.2.2–4.5.2.

N/A

4.2.2 Consultation prior to developing MRS or pre-approved alternative methodology

Prior to developing and conducting the MRS, or conducting the ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, the Lead Agency is required to consult with (1) the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, and other appropriate entities, and (2) organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.45 (e)). Local child care program administrators may also be good informants to Lead Agencies on narrow cost analyses.

Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the:

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- a. State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body:

The Lead Agency consulted with the ECAC during the Council's regularly held meetings for their review, edits and suggested changes to the survey. The Lead Agency shared the MRS/Narrow Cost Analysis with the ECAC and provided all members with an advanced copy of the final report.

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- b. Local child care program administrators:

The Lead Agency consulted with the CCAC and the CCPC, which include local tribal and county child care program administrators, for their input on the development of the MRS. Both committees were updated on the results of the new MRS/Narrow Cost Analysis and received links to the final report through normal dissemination methods.

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- c. Local child care resource and referral agencies:

The Lead Agency consulted with the CCR&R agencies on the development of the MRS. The CCR&R provided important data to this process and where provided with the link to the final report.

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- d. Organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors:

The Lead Agency consulted with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) as well as with key early care and education (ECE) stakeholders in the development of a more comprehensive MRS designed to identify the "true cost of care" to provide high-quality child care services across the state.

Stakeholders involved in the collaboration included:

Wisconsin Family Child Care Association (WFCCA)
Greater Milwaukee Foundation (GMF)
Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA)
Wisconsin Child Care Administrators Association (WCCAA)
Wisconsin Inter Tribal Child Care Association (WITCCA)

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e. Other. Describe:

N/A

4.2.3 Benchmarks for MRS or pre-approved alternative methodology

ACF has established a set of benchmarks, largely based on research, to identify the components of a valid and reliable market rate survey (81 FR, p. 67509). To be considered valid and reliable a Market Rate Survey or preapproved alternative methodology meets the following:

- o represents the child care market
- o provides complete and current data
- o uses rigorous data collection procedures
- o reflects geographic variations
- o analyzes data in a manner that captures other relevant differences

An MRS can use administrative data, such as child care resource and referral data, if it is representative of the market.

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a. Describe how each of the benchmarks are met in either the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology.

i. Represent the child care market:

The Lead Agency has developed a new comprehensive market rate survey (MRS) that analyzed the cost of providing child services, known as the narrow cost analysis, that meet basic health, safety, quality and staffing requirements, and higher-quality care at each level of quality, as defined by the Lead Agency. The newly developed analysis has identified the gaps between the cost of care and subsidy levels adopted by the state which will be considered as part of the rate setting process. The new MRS process included input from key ECE stakeholders to better reach all child care providers throughout the state to ensure a high return rate through the survey process. Additionally, the MRS will be redesigned to include questions designed to gather additional cost of care information from all types of providers to ensure the identification of geographical differences as well as gathering data from all rural and urban areas of the state. This new Narrow Cost Analysis and MRS was completed on completion on May 31, 2022 and results were posted to the Lead Agency's webpage. The completed analysis can be viewed at: 2022 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/ccdbg/2022-market-rate-survey-snapshot.pdf>) Market Rate Survey Snapshot and at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/ccdbg/2022-ccmarket-survey-results-report.pdf>) 2022 Child Care Market Rate Survey Results.

ii. Provide complete and current data:

The Lead Agency developed a new market rate survey that provides a significant amount of data around the cost of providing child services, known as the narrow cost analysis, that meet basic health, safety, quality and staffing requirements, and higher-quality care at each level of quality, as defined by the Lead Agency. The newly developed analysis was completed and posted on the Lead Agency's webpage on June 30, 2022. The completed analysis can be viewed at: 2022 Market Rate Survey Snapshot and at (https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/ccdbg/2022-market-rate-survey-snapshot.pdf) Market Rate Survey Snapshot and at (https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/ccdbg/2022-cmarket-survey-results-report.pdf) 2022 Child Care Market Rate Survey Results.

iii. Use rigorous data collection procedures:

The Lead Agency developed a comprehensive data collection process based on feedback from multiple early care and education stakeholders. This included the collection of provider rates across the state as well as internal and external data reviews regarding wages/salary information, standardized business costs, and other standard expenses.

iv. Reflect geographic variations:

The market rate reflects the urban percentage in each county. Counties are grouped into one of four urban groups: 0-24% urban, 25-49% urban, 50-74% urban, and 75- 100% urban.

v. Analyze data in a manner that captures other relevant differences:

The Lead Agency developed a Narrow Cost Analysis and market rate survey that allowed for a more complete analysis regarding the cost of providing child services. This analysis includes data regarding the necessary costs to ensure that all services meet basic health, safety, quality and staffing requirements, and higher-quality care at each level of quality, as defined by the Lead Agency. T

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b. Given the impact of COVID-19 on the child care market, do you think that the data you gathered (as indicated in 4.2.1) on the prices or costs of child care adequately reflect the child care market as you submit this plan?

No

Yes. If yes, why do you think the data represents the child care market?

Due to the receipt of the one year waiver the Lead Agency conducted the narrow cost analysis and market rate survey during the time frame of 1/1/2022 - 6/1/2022 which was more reflective of the ongoing costs of child care services across the state. During the period of 2020 - 2021 the effects of COVID-19 were more widely felt and the number of available providers and child care slots greatly impacted the market place.

4.2.4 Variations in the price or cost of services

Describe how the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology reflects variations in the price or cost of child care services by:

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a. Geographic area (e.g., statewide or local markets). Describe:

The market rate reflects the urban percentage in each county. Counties are grouped into one of four urban groups: 0-24% urban, 25-49% urban, 50-74% urban, and 75- 100% urban.

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b. Type of provider. Describe:

Market rates are collected and grouped by type of provider. Separate rates are calculated for family

(licensed and license-exempt) and licensed group providers.

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c. Age of child. Describe:

Market rates are grouped by age of child (0-1, 2-3, 4-5, and 6 and older).

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d. Describe any other key variations examined by the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, such as quality level.

Child care programs/providers are identified by Star ratings through the Narrow Cost Analysis/Market Rate Survey. This YoungStar quality rating was reflected in the overall costs associated with running a high-quality child care program. The survey results broke down annual per child costs by each YoungStar level (e.g., 2 Star, 3 Star, 4 Star, and 5 Star).

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4.2.5 Narrow cost analysis completion

Has the Narrow Cost Analysis been completed for the FY 2022 – 2024 CCDF Plan?

No, a waiver is being requested in Appendix A. If no, describe the status of the Lead Agency's upcoming narrow cost analysis.

Yes, the narrow cost analysis information is included in the report as described in 4.2.6. If yes, describe how the State/Territory analyzed the cost of child care through a narrow cost analysis for the FY 2022 – 2024 CCDF Plan, including:

- a. The methodology the Lead Agency used to conduct, obtain, and analyze data on the estimated cost of care (narrow cost analysis), including any relevant variation by geographic location, category of provider, or age of child (98.45 (f)(ii)).
The MRS child care rates and provider practices were obtained through two provider-based surveys. The market rate survey data was obtained through Wisconsin's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) network. The CCR&R network is made up of eight regional offices that assist parents in finding licensed, local child care. All data collected by the CCR&R agencies was submitted to Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA) for submission directly to DCF. This annual survey, Business Information Form (BIF), is the source for estimates of monthly market rates for full-time child care by provider type, age group, and geographic location. An example of the tool used for the collection of this data can be viewed at Business Information Form. The provider practices data was obtained through a survey developed by DCF to capture additional costs related to child care, such as registration and other fee information and costs of high-quality care. This narrow cost-of-care survey instrument was developed in coordination with DCF, SFTA, and CCR&R staff to fully capture other costs of child care not identified through the more traditional MRS approach. An example of this survey instrument can be viewed at Narrow Cost of Care survey.

Additionally, the 2022 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/ccdbg/2022-ccmarket-survey-results-report.pdf>) Child Care Market Rate Survey Results report shows the breakdown of provider prices by region and includes a state map that is color coded to indicate the percent of urbanicity (pages 8-10).

- b. How the methodology addresses the cost of child care providers' implementation of health, safety, quality and staffing requirements (i.e. applicable licensing and regulatory requirements, health and safety standards, training and professional development standards, and appropriate child to staff ratio, groups size limits, and caregiver qualification requirements (98.45 (f)(ii)(A)).

To better understand the true cost of child care at various levels of quality and to comply with CCDF regulations, DCF also conducted a narrow cost analysis as part of the 2022 MRS. This analysis was designed to capture additional cost information necessary to successfully operate a high-quality child care program, including non-personnel costs that are included in Wisconsin's Quality Rating and Improvement System at higher levels and compensation that is commensurate with education completed. The narrow cost analysis included data from a newly developed provider survey, the collection of publicly available data, and the use of the ACF-OCC Provider Cost of Quality Calculator (PCQC). Data collected through these processes included: cost of implementing high-quality care, staff costs, facility expenses, professional development, and ensuring sufficient child-to-staff ratios. The narrow cost analysis survey was created in collaboration with multiple DCF staff and was sent to regulated providers throughout the state.

- c. How the methodology addresses the cost of higher-quality care, as defined by the Lead Agency using a quality rating and improvement system or other system of quality indicators, at each level of quality (98.45 (f)(ii)(B)).
Additionally, the 2022 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/ccdbg/2022-ccmarket-survey-results-report.pdf>) Child Care Market Rate Survey Results report shows the breakdown of Per Child Annual Cost of Care by age range and quality level. Data provided also details standard non-personnel related costs to operating a child care program broken down by center-based vs family-based child care programs (pages 11 - 14) . This data is also sorted by region and includes a state map that is color coded to indicate the percent of urbanicity (pages 8-10).
- d. The gap between costs incurred by child care providers and the Lead Agency's payment rates based on findings from the narrow cost analysis.
The 2022 analysis clearly outlined a need to address child care workforce salaries. For example, the Lead Agency reviewed the following ECE workforce studies, recommendations, and regional snapshots that were completed:

o (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/wi-ece-workforce-directors-report.pdf>) Report on the Survey of Program Directors (Report 1)

o (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/wi-ece-workforce-teacher-report.pdf>) Report on the Survey of Center-Based Teachers (Report 2)

o (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/childcare/pdf/pdg/wi-ece-workforce-family-provider-report.pdf>) Report on the Survey of Family Providers (Report 3)

https://mcusercontent.com/a8d1a2575bf0bb6765d051595/files/18608578-0949-2506-5b75-635ea2dae575/Workforce_Survey_Summary_MKE_final.pdf) A Snapshot of Early Care and Education Teachers in Milwaukee

By averaging data from this narrow cost analysis and market rate survey as well as data from Wisconsin’s ECE workforce registry, the Wisconsin Registry, and the 2021 workforce studies listed above, the Lead Agency developed an estimated “current state” of child care workforce salary costs for staff from both Licensed Group and Licensed Family Child Care Programs. The Lead Agency then created a ECE Workforce Salary Scale for Wisconsin, which includes recommended wages for various positions within the workforce based on the median Wisconsin workforce wages at similar levels of educational requirements. The Wisconsin Salary Scale includes salary parity with statewide kindergarten teachers and can be viewed at the 2022 <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/ccdbg/2022-ccmarket-survey-results-report.pdf>) Child Care Market Rate Survey Results (pages 15 - 16).

4.2.6 Detailed report of the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology results

After conducting the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, the Lead Agency must prepare a detailed report containing the results of the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. The detailed report must also include the Narrow Cost Analysis, as described in 4.2.5, which estimates the cost of care (including any relevant variation by geographic location, category of provider, or age of child) necessary to support (1) child care providers’ implementation of the health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements, and (2) higher quality care, as defined by the Lead Agency using a quality rating and improvement system or other system of quality indicators, at each level of quality. For states without a QRIS or for a state with a QRIS system that is currently limited to only certain providers, those states may use other quality indicators (e.g. provider status related to accreditation, PreK standards, Head Start performance standards, school-age quality standards, or state defined quality measures.)

The Lead Agency must make the report with these results widely available no later than 30 days after completion of the report, including posting the results on the Lead Agency website. The Lead Agency must describe in the detailed report how the Lead Agency took into consideration the views and comments of the public or stakeholders.

Describe how the Lead Agency made the results of the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology report widely available to the public (98.45(f)(1)) by responding to the questions below.

| Amended: | Effective | Date | 06/01/2022 |
|---|------------------|-------------|-------------------|
| a. Date the report containing results was made widely available—no later than 30 days after the completion of the report. | | | |

06/01/2022

| Amended: | Effective | Date | 06/01/2022 |
|----------|-----------|------|------------|
|----------|-----------|------|------------|

b. Describe how the Lead Agency made the detailed report containing results widely available and provide the link where the report is posted.

Results of the Market Rate Survey are posted on the Lead Agency's public website at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/ccdbg/2022-ccmarket-survey-results-report.pdf>) 2022 Child Care Market Survey Results. There is also a smaller (3 page) document that summarizes the findings of the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/ccdbg/2022-market-rate-survey-snapshot.pdf>) 2022 Child Care Market Rate Survey.

| Amended: | Effective | Date | 06/01/2022 |
|----------|-----------|------|------------|
|----------|-----------|------|------------|

c. Describe how the Lead Agency considered stakeholder views and comments in the detailed report.

The Lead Agency includes provider comments in the final report as necessary to clearly outline the status of child care rates across the state.

4.3 Establish Adequate Payment Rates

The Lead Agency must set CCDF subsidy payment rates, in accordance with the results of the current MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, as identified in 4.2.1, at a level to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services that are comparable with those provided to families not receiving CCDF assistance. Lead Agencies must also consider the costs of base and higher quality care at each level as part of its rate setting. The Lead Agency must re-evaluate its payment rates at least every 3 years.

4.3.1 Base payment rates and percentiles

Provide the base payment rates and percentiles (based on the most recent MRS as identified in 4.2.1) for the following categories below. Lead Agencies are required to provide a summary of data and facts in their Plan to demonstrate how its payment rates ensure equal access. The preamble to the final rule (81 FR, p. 67512), indicates that a benchmark for adequate payment rates is the 75th percentile of the most recent MRS. The 75th percentile is the number separating the lowest 75 percent of rates from the highest 25 percent. Setting rates at the 75th percentile, while not a requirement, would ensure that eligible children have access to three out of four child care slots.

The 75th percentile benchmark applies to the base rates. Base rates are the lowest, foundational rates before any differentials are added (e.g., for higher quality or other purposes). Further, base rates must be sufficient to ensure that minimum health and safety and staffing requirements are covered.

Percentiles are not required if the Lead Agency conducted an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, but must be reported if the Lead Agency conducted a MRS. For states that conduct an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, report the base payment rates based on a full-time weekly rate.

The ages and types of care listed below are meant to provide a snapshot of the categories on which rates can be based and are not intended to be comprehensive of all categories that might exist or to reflect the terms used by the Lead Agency for particular ages. If rates are not statewide, please use the most populous geographic region (defined as the area serving highest number of CCDF children) to report base payment rates below.

Amended: Effective Date 06/01/2022

a. Fill in the table below based on either the statewide rates or the most populous area of the state (area serving highest number of children accessing CCDF). To facilitate compiling state by state payment rates, provide the full-time weekly base payment rates in the table below. If weekly payment rates are not published, then the Lead Agency will need to calculate its equivalent.

| Age of child in what type of licensed child care setting. (All rates are full-time) | Base payment rate (including unit) | Full-time weekly base payment rate | If the Lead Agency conducted an MRS, what is the percentile of the base payment rate? | If the Lead Agency used an alternative methodology what percent of the estimated cost of care is the base rate? |
|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| i. Infant (6 months) Center care | \$1,491.41 per month | \$343.00 | 76th | N/A |
| ii. Toddler (18 months) Center care | \$1,491.41 per month | \$343.00 | 76th | N/A |
| iii. Preschooler (4 years) Center care | \$1,196.17 per month | \$275.10 | 80th | N/A |
| iv. School-age child (6 years) Center care (Based on full-day, full-year rates that would be paid during the summer.) | \$1,065.30 per month | \$245.00 | 77th | N/A |
| v. Infant (6 months) Family Child Care | \$1,196.17 per month | \$275.10 | 80th | N/A |
| vi. Toddler (18 months) Family Child Care | \$1,196.17 per month | \$275.10 | 80th | N/A |
| vii. Preschooler (4 years) Family Child Care | \$1,039.42 per month | \$239.05 | 80th | N/A |

| Age of child in what type of licensed child care setting. (All rates are full-time) | Base payment rate (including unit) | Full-time weekly base payment rate | If the Lead Agency conducted an MRS, what is the percentile of the base payment rate? | If the Lead Agency used an alternative methodology what percent of the estimated cost of care is the base rate? |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| viii. School-age child (6 years) Family Child Care (Based on full-day, full-year rates that would be paid during the summer.) | \$957.24 per month | \$220.15 | 81st | N/A |

Amended: Effective Date 06/01/2022

b. If the Lead Agency does not publish weekly rates then how were these rates calculated (e.g., were daily rates multiplied by 5 or monthly rates divided by 4.3)?

The Lead Agency took the weekly rates and multiplied them by 4.348125 to get the weekly amount.

Amended: Effective Date 06/01/2022

c. Describe how the Lead Agency defines and calculates part-time and full-time care.

Part-time is defined as 0-34 hours. Full-time rates are 35 or more hours. Subsidy below 35 hours are calculated using an hourly maximum rate multiplied by the number of hours of care needed. The hourly maximum rate is the weekly base rate provided in 4.3.1(a) divided by 35. Subsidy for 35 hours or more are calculated using the FT base payment rate provided in 4.3.1(a).

Amended: Effective Date 06/01/2022

d. Provide the date these current payment rates became effective (i.e., date of last update based on most recent MRS as reported in 4.2.1).

06/01/2022

Amended: Effective Date 06/01/2022

e. If applicable, identify the most populous area of the state (area serving highest number of children accessing CCDF) used to complete the responses above.

Milwaukee County

Amended: Effective Date 06/01/2022

f. Provide the citation, or link, if available, to the payment rates

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/wishares/pdf/max-rates-statewide.pdf>

Amended: Effective Date 06/01/2022

g. If the payment rates are not set by the Lead Agency for the entire state/territory, describe how many jurisdictions set their own payment rates (98.16(i)(3)).

N/A

Amended: Effective Date 01/01/2022

4.3.2 Differentiating payment rates

Describe how and on what factors the Lead Agency differentiates payment rates. Check all that apply.

a. Geographic area. Describe:

N/A

b. Type of provider. Describe:

The Lead Agency uses multiple factors when determining Wisconsin Shares subsidy rates. For example, part of the overall rate calculation is the type of provider selected by the individual parent/family. Authorized rates are adjusted based on the type of provider

Licensed Providers

Group Child Care Centers;
Family Child Care Centers; and
Day Camps

Certified Providers

Regular Certified Providers

c. Age of child. Describe:

The Lead Agency has the following age ranges that are associated with the development of Wisconsin Shares subsidy rates:

0 - 1 year, 11 months
2 - 3 years, 11 months
4 - 5 years, 11 months
6+ years

The age of the child at the time of application is a determining factor in the setting of the Wisconsin Shares Subsidy rate.

d. Quality level. Describe:

The Lead Agency provides on-going quality payments directly to providers through the Child Care Counts program which provides ongoing monthly payments to support providers remain open, recruit and retain staff, and ensure high-quality care is available. This change was effective as of 1/1/2022 and took the place of previously identified YoungStar quality adjustments.

e. Other. Describe:

N/A

Amended: Effective Date 10/27/2022

4.3.3 Tiered rates, differential rates, or add-ons

Lead Agencies can choose to establish tiered rates, differential rates, or add-ons on top of their base rates as a way to increase payment rates for targeted needs (i.e., a higher rate for special needs children as both an incentive for providers to serve children with special needs and as a way to cover the higher costs to the provider to provide care for special needs children). Lead Agencies may pay providers more than their private pay rates as an incentive or to cover costs for higher quality care (81 FR, p. 67514).

Has the Lead Agency chosen to implement tiered reimbursement or differential rates?

No

Yes, If yes, identify below any tiered or differential rates, and at a minimum, indicate the process and basis used for determining the tiered rates, including if the rates were based on the MRS or an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. Check and describe all that apply.

a. Tiered or differential rates are not implemented.

N/A

b. Differential rate for non-traditional hours. Describe:

N/A

c. Differential rate for children with special needs, as defined by the state/territory. Describe:

Wisconsin Shares provides eligible parents who have a child with a special need or disability with an increased EBT card benefit load available for the parent to initiate payment to the selected child care program that provides for services, materials, and/or equipment necessary to support the inclusive care of the child. The special needs rate is determined on a case-by-case basis. The parent must submit documentation of the special circumstances, and the child care provider must show justification for the differential rate. The differential rate will range from the standard maximum rate up to \$19.99 per hour.

d. Differential rate for infants and toddlers. Note: Do not check if the Lead Agency has a different base rate for infants/toddlers with no separate bonus or add-on. Describe:

N/A

e. Differential rate for school-age programs. Note: Do not check if the Lead Agency has a different base rate for school-age children with no separate bonus or add-on. Describe:

N/A

f. Differential rate for higher quality, as defined by the state/territory. Describe:

Wisconsin's YoungStar quality rating system requires any provider who receives Wisconsin Shares authorizations to be rated, but all other providers are encouraged to participate.

g. Other differential rates or tiered rates. Describe:

The Lead Agency is providing an increase in Wisconsin Child Care Shares payments to children and families residing in the 53206-zip code which is located in the City of Milwaukee. This pilot project is focused on supporting very low-income families in acquiring high-quality child care for their children.

4.3.4 Establishment of adequate payment rates.

a. Describe how base payment rates are adequate and enable providers to meet health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements under CCDF, and how they were established based on the most recent MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology and the Narrow Cost Analysis, as reported in 4.2.1 and 4.2.5.. In determining compliance with the Act for the equal access provisions in the FY2019-2021 CCDF Plan, the OCC reviewed all the states with payment rates below the 75th percentile benchmark. Of those states, the half with the lowest payment rates were considered non-compliant and placed on a corrective action plan (CAP). These states all had rates below the 25th percentile for either some or all categories of care. The 25th percentile is not to be viewed as a benchmark or a long-term solution to gauge equal access. It is also not to be viewed as sufficient for compliance in future plan cycles. OCC expects to continue to take action against states with the lowest rates in future plan cycles in an effort to keep payment rates moving upward toward ensuring equal access. Note: Per the preamble (81 FR p. 67512), in instances where an MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology indicates that prices or costs have increased, Lead Agencies must raise their rates as a result.

The Lead Agency completes annual reviews of all regulated providers to ensure they continue to meet all health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements. These annual visits serve to verify that child care providers receiving Wisconsin Shares Subsidy payments have sufficient resources to provide safe, high-quality child care to families. As the Lead Agency has advocated for higher Shares Subsidy amounts the annual provider visits have shown an increase in staff funding, reduced family share requirements, and higher levels of ECE learning resources. Through the upcoming newly enhanced MRS process the Lead Agency is identifying specifically worded questions to continue the evaluation of how Shares Subsidy rates are improving the child care landscape in Wisconsin.

b. Describe the process used for setting rates, including how the Lead Agency factors in the cost of care, including any increased costs and provider fees because of COVID-19, and how such costs may be modified after the pandemic subsidies.

N/A

4.3.5 Cost of higher quality

Describe how the Lead Agency took the cost of higher quality, as determined in 4.2.5, into account, including how payment rates for higher-quality care, as defined by the Lead Agency using a QRIS or other system of quality indicators, relate to the estimated cost of care at each level of quality. Note: For states without a QRIS, the states may use other quality indicators (e.g. provider status related to accreditation, PreK standards, Head Start performance standards, or state-defined quality measures).

N/A

4.3.6 Additional facts in determining payments rates

Identify and describe any additional facts that the Lead Agency considered in determining its payment rates ensure equal access. If applicable, provide a description of how any additional health and safety costs, because of the COVID-19 pandemic are included in rate setting.

N/A

4.4 Implement Generally Accepted Payment Practices and Ensure Timeliness of Payments

Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate that they have established payment practices applicable to all CCDF child care providers that include ensuring the timeliness of payments by either (1) paying prospectively prior to the delivery of services or (2) paying within no more than 21 calendar days of the receipt of a complete invoice for services. To the extent practicable, the Lead Agency must also support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by (1) paying based on a child's enrollment rather than attendance, (2) providing full payment if a child attends at least 85 percent of the authorized time, (3) providing full payment if a child is absent for 5 or fewer days in a month, or (4) using an alternative approach for which the Lead Agency provides a justification in its Plan (658E(c)(2)(S)(ii); 98.45(I)(2)).

Lead Agencies are required to use CCDF payment practices that reflect generally accepted payment practices of child care providers who serve children who do not receive CCDF-funded assistance. Unless a Lead Agency is able to demonstrate that the following policies are not generally accepted in its particular state, territory, or service area or among particular categories or types of providers, Lead Agencies must (1) pay providers based on established part-time or full-time rates rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time and (2) pay for reasonable, mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents (658E(c)(2)(S); 98.45(I)(3)). Responses may also identify any additional health and safety fees providers are charging as a result of COVID-19.

In addition, there are certain other generally accepted payment practices that are required. Lead Agencies are required to ensure that child care providers receive payment for any services in accordance with a payment agreement or an authorization for services, ensure that child care providers receive prompt notice of changes to a family's eligibility status that could impact payment, and establish timely appeal and resolution processes for any payment inaccuracies and disputes (98.45(I)(4) through (6); 658E(c)(2)(S)(ii); 98.45(I)(4); 98.45(I)(5); 98.45(I)(6)).

4.4.1 Payment practices

Certify by identifying and describing the payment practices below that the Lead Agency has implemented for all CCDF child care providers.

Amended: Effective Date 02/10/2023

a. Ensure the timeliness of payments by either (Lead Agency to implement at least one of the following):

i. Paying prospectively prior to the delivery of services. Describe the policy or procedure.

A full month's subsidy benefit amount is made available through the parent's EBT card at the beginning of each month. A provider will enter into a written payment agreement with each parent that receives a child care subsidy. Parents are responsible for determining when the payment is transferred to the child care provider's account.

ii. Paying within no more than 21 calendar days of the receipt of a complete invoice for services. Describe the policy or procedure.

N/A

Amended: Effective Date 02/10/2023

b. To the extent practicable, support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by: Note: The Lead Agency is to choose at least one of the following:

i. Paying based on a child's enrollment rather than attendance. Describe the policy or procedure.

The Lead Agency's EBT payment practice prospectively loads funds for the parent's monthly child care needs. The child care need is determined by an assessment of the hours of child care needed for the parent to participate in their approved activity.

ii. Providing full payment if a child attends at least 85 percent of the authorized time. Describe the policy or procedure.

N/A

iii. Providing full payment if a child is absent for five or fewer days in a month. Describe the policy or procedure.

N/a

iv. Use an alternative approach for which the Lead Agency provides a justification in its Plan. If chosen, please describe the policy or procedure and the Lead Agency's justification for this approach.

N/A

Amended: Effective Date 02/10/2023

c. The Lead Agency's payment practices reflect generally accepted payment practices of child care providers who serve children who do not receive CCDF subsidies. These payment practices must include the following two practices unless the Lead Agency provides evidence that such practices are not generally accepted in its state (658E(c)(2)(S); 98.45(l)(3)).

- i. Paying on a part-time or full-time basis (rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time). Describe the policy or procedure and include a definition of the time increments (e.g., part time, full-time).

The Lead Agency does not pay for child care services specifically on a part-time or full-time basis. All full-time and part-time authorizations are calculated based on the number of hours being requested per week. Part-time includes any authorization for fewer than 35 hours per week while full-time includes authorizations 35 hours or higher. The parent has the option to pay the provider daily, weekly, or monthly. This is determined by the provider and parent and included in a written payment agreement.

The Lead Agency is currently in the process of making policy and system changes to begin paying for child services based on a part-time or full-time basis rather than basing payments on hourly increments. This payment development revision is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2023. At that time the Lead Agency will update it's CCDF State Plan with an amendment that will detail all new policies and procedures around the transition to the part-time or full-time payment processes.

- ii. Paying for reasonable mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents. Describe the policy or procedure.

The department does not pay for mandatory registration fees.

Amended: Effective Date 02/10/2023

d. The Lead Agency ensures that providers are paid in accordance with a written payment agreement or an authorization for services that includes, at a minimum, information regarding provider payment policies, including rates, schedules, any fees charged to providers, including _____

fees related to COVID 19, and the dispute-resolution process.

Describe:

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure they pay the provider in accordance with their written payment agreement. Wis. Admin. Code DCF 201.038(5) requires the written payment agreement to include: provider's monthly or weekly child care price; provider's days and hours of operation; any discounts or scholarships that are available to parents, and any discounts or scholarships that the parent is receiving; parent's payment schedule; provider's anticipated closure dates; payment expectations for the child's anticipated and unanticipated absences and the provider's closure dates; parent procedures for termination of a child's enrollment; and provider procedures for termination of a child's enrollment.

Amended: Effective Date 02/10/2023

e. The Lead Agency provides prompt notice to providers regarding any changes to the family's eligibility status that could impact payments, and such a notice is sent no later than the day that the Lead Agency becomes aware that such a change will occur. Describe:

Child care providers are provided with authorization information that is mailed to them on the last business day of each month and contains a list of all current and future authorizations, any backdated authorizations since the last notice was sent, any authorizations that were deleted or ended by the worker or system, and that were previously listed on an earlier notice.

Amended: Effective Date 02/10/2023

f. The Lead Agency has a timely appeal and resolution process for payment inaccuracies and disputes. Describe:

To resolve inaccuracies and disputes regarding the subsidy amount that is loaded to the parent's EBT card, parents should first contact their local agency. If a dispute cannot be resolved at that level, a parent may request a fair hearing through Wisconsin's Division of Hearings and Appeals. Fair hearings must be requested in writing within 45 days of the eligibility or authorization notice. A hearing officer will listen to the parent and the local agency representative at the hearing and determine if the decision was right or wrong based on the information provided there and also on Wisconsin Statutes, Administrative Rules, and state policies. Parents may represent themselves at a hearing or be represented by an attorney, relative, friend or anyone they choose. The DHA responds to a fair hearing request on the following business day. According to the DHA website it can then take up to five days for the agency involved to respond. Once DHA receives a response from the agency involved a hearing date will be established, which is usually anywhere from four to six weeks from the date DHA received the fair hearing request. The following DHA website contains additional information and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section:
(<https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LicensesHearings/DHAWorkandFamilyServicesUnit.aspx>)
<https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LicensesHearings/DHAWorkandFamilyServicesUnit.aspx>

Amended: Effective Date 02/10/2023

g. Other. Describe:

N/A

4.4.2 Payment practices across regions counties, and/or geographic areas

Do payment practices vary across regions, counties, and/or geographic areas?

No, the practices do not vary across areas.

Yes, the practices vary across areas. Describe:

N/A

4.4.3 Payment practices supporting equal access

Describe how Lead Agencies' payment practices described in subsection 4.4 support equal access to a full range of providers.

The Lead Agency has established a generally accepted payment practice that ensures Wisconsin Child Care Shares Subsidy recipients' payment practices mirror that of the private pay universe. This generally accepted payment practice ensures Shares Subsidy recipients full access to all levels of high-quality child care that participate in the Shares Subsidy program. Shares recipients can pay their provider via three options that will ensure child care funds are deposited directly in the bank account of their child care provider.

4.5 Establish Affordable Co-Payments

Family co-payments are addressed in Section 3 related to minimum 12-month eligibility and the graduated phase-out provision and also in this subsection, because they are an important element for determining equal access. If a Lead Agency allows providers to charge amounts more than the required family co-payments, the Lead Agency must provide a rationale for this practice, including how charging such additional amounts will not negatively impact a family's ability to receive care they might otherwise receive, taking into consideration a family's co-payment and the provider's payment rate.

4.5.1 Affordable family contribution/co-payment

How will the Lead Agency ensure that the family contribution/co-payment, based on a sliding-fee scale, is affordable and is not a barrier to families receiving CCDF services (98.16 (k))? Check all that apply.

a. Limit the maximum co-payment per family. Describe:

The co-payment is determined by the number of hours for which the family receives child care subsidy and is capped at 152 hours per month per child across all locations. If a family has five children or more, the total family co-payment hours are capped at 760 hours per month.

In order to ensure affordability the Lead Agency authorizes subsidized hours up to 35 hours per week (153 hours per month) and then from 51-75 hours per week (5-109 hours per month in addition to the 153 hours per month). Copayments are not charged for the hours that are not subsidized between 36-50 per week or for the 51-75 hours per week. This promotes affordability by not charging a copayment for hours that aren't subsidized or for above full-time hours (50 hours) to support parents working overtime. A child with two providers also benefits in that they may receive subsidy for more than 153 hours per month between the two providers, but their copayment is still not more than if the child only attended one provider. Similarly, families with five children or more with authorizations are not charged an

additional copayment.

b. Limit the combined amount of co-payment for all children to a percentage of family income. List the percentage of the co-payment limit and describe.

N/A

c. Minimize the abrupt termination of assistance before a family can afford the full cost of care (“the cliff effect”) as part of the graduated phase-out of assistance discussed in 3.2.5. Describe:

If family income is at or above 190% FPL, but not exceeding 200% FPL, at the previous eligibility redetermination, the family co-payment may increase based on increases in income but will not exceed the family co-payment for 200% FPL until the next annual eligibility determination. If family income is at or above 200% FPL at the previous eligibility redetermination, the family’s co-payment will increase \$1 for every \$3 by which family income exceeds 200% FPL until the family reaches 85% State Median Income or assumes the full cost of care.

d. Other. Describe:

The Lead Agency did not increase the co-payment per hour for 2020 and 2021 to make progress towards the goal of the copayment not exceeding 7% of family income.

4.5.2 Option to allows providers to charge additional amounts

Does the Lead Agency choose the option to allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment in instances where the provider’s price exceeds the subsidy payment (98.45(b)(5))?

No

Yes. If yes:

- i. Provide the rationale for the Lead Agency’s policy to allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment, including a demonstration of how the policy promotes affordability and access for families.

The Lead Agency allows child care providers to charge additional amounts above the required co-payment in order for providers to ensure they can continue to provide safe, high-quality child care to children and families across the state. This additional cost, which is referred to as the parent share, is a standard practice across the state and will be better identified through the new MRS that is being developed by the Lead Agency. As the Lead Agency continues to advocate for higher Shares Subsidy rates the family share amount will continue to be adjusted downward by providers.

- ii. Provide data (including data on the size and frequency of such amounts) on the extent to which CCDF providers charge additional amounts to families.

N/A

- iii. Describe the Lead Agency’s analysis of the interaction between the additional amounts charged to families with the required family co-payment and the ability of current subsidy payment rates to provide access to care without additional fees.

The amounts listed above vary based on the co-payment sliding fee scale. Families with a lower income receive a higher subsidy amount which helps families reasonably access care. The Lead Agency, through the receipt of an federal ACF OPRE CCDBG grant is currently in the process of collecting data specific to family share requirements across the state.

5 Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings

Lead Agencies are required to certify that there are in effect licensing requirements applicable to all child care services in the state/territory, which supports the health and safety of all children in child care. States and territories may allow licensing exemptions. Lead Agencies must describe how such licensing exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, and development of CCDF children in license-exempt care (98.16 (u)).

Lead Agencies also must certify that there are in effect health and safety standards and training requirements applicable to providers serving CCDF children whether they are licensed or license- exempt. These health and safety requirements must be appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served, must include specific topics and training on those topics, and are subject to monitoring and enforcement procedures.

The organization of this section begins with a description of the licensing system for all child care providers in a state or territory and then moves to focus specifically on CCDF providers who may be licensed, or those exempt from licensing. The next section addresses child-staff ratios, group size limits, and required qualifications for caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.16(m)) serving CCDF children. The section then covers the health and safety requirements; standards, training, and monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that CCDF child care providers comply with licensing and health and safety requirements (98.16(n)). Finally, Lead Agencies are asked to describe any exemptions for relative providers (98.16(l)). In some cases, CCDF health and safety requirements may be integrated within the licensing system for licensed providers and may be separate for CCDF providers who are license-exempt. In either case, Lead Agencies are expected to identify and describe health and safety requirements for all providers receiving CCDF.

Note: When responding to questions in this section, the OCC recognizes that each state/territory identifies and defines its own categories of care. The OCC does not expect states/territories to change their definitions to fit the CCDF-defined categories of care. For these questions, provide responses that closely match the CCDF categories of care.

Criminal background check requirements are included in this section (98.16(o)). It is important to note that these requirements apply to all child care staff members who are licensed, regulated, or registered under state/territory law and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services.

Note: When asked for citations, responses can include state statute, regulations, administrative rules, policy manuals or policy issuances. See the Introduction on page 4 for more detail.

5.1 Licensing Requirements

Each state/territory must certify it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to all child care services provided within the state/territory (not restricted to providers receiving CCDF funds) and provide a detailed description of these requirements and how the requirements are effectively enforced (658E(c)(2)(F)). If any types of providers are exempt from licensing requirements, the state/territory must describe those exemptions and describe how these exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, or development of children. The descriptions must also include any exemptions based on provider category, type, or setting; length of day; and providers not subject to licensing because the number of children served falls below a Lead Agency-defined threshold and any other exemption to licensing requirements

(658E(c)(2)(F); 98.16(u); 98.40(a)(2)(iv)).

5.1.1 Providers subject to licensing

To certify, describe the licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided within the state/territory by identifying the providers in your state/territory that are subject to licensing using the CCDF categories listed below. Check, identify, and describe all that apply, and provide a citation to the licensing rule.

a. Center-based child care.

i. Identify the providers subject to licensing:

Licensed Group Child Care: A "Group child care center" or "center" means a facility where a person for less than 24 hours a day provides care and supervision for nine or more children who are not related to the provider. No person may for compensation provide care and supervision for four or more children under the age of seven for less than 24 hours a day unless that person obtains a license to operate a child care center from the department. Wis. Statutes, s. 48.65, DCF 251.02, DCF 251.03(12), DCF 251.13

ii. Describe the licensing requirements:

The child care licensing program is a component of the services provided by the Lead Agency. The program is accountable for the statewide licensure of Wisconsin's child care facilities, and monitoring of public school-operated programs that wish to be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares. The purpose of the program is to promote the health, safety, and welfare of children in licensed child care. The Lead Agency ensures that licensing requirements are met through ongoing inspections of child care facilities. Under Wisconsin law, no person may provide care and supervision for four or more children under the age of seven for less than 24 hours a day unless that person obtains a license to operate a child care center from the Department. This does not include a relative or guardian of a child who provides care and supervision for the child; a public or parochial school; a person employed to come to the home of the child's parent or guardian for less than 24 hours a day; or a county, city, village, town, school district, or library that provides programs primarily intended for recreational or social purposes.

iii. Provide the citation:

Wis. Statutes, s. 48.65, s. 120.13(14), DCF 251.02, DCF 251.03(12), DCF 251.13,

b. Family child care. Describe and provide the citation:

i. Identify the providers subject to licensing:

Please Note that for the completion of this question the following definition applies: "Licensed centers refers to Licensed Group and Licensed Family"

If a person provides care on a regular basis to four or more children under the age of seven years, that person shall be deemed to be providing care for compensation and shall be licensed. Licensed Family Child Care Centers provide care for between four and eight children, usually in the provider's home. "Family child care center" or "center" means a facility where a person provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours a day for at least four and not more than eight children who are not related to the provider. No person may for compensation provide

care and supervision for four or more children under the age of seven for less than 24 hours a day unless that person obtains a license to operate a child care center from the department.

- ii. Describe the licensing requirements:

The child care licensing program is a component of the services provided by the Lead Agency. The program is accountable for the statewide licensure of Wisconsin's child care facilities, including licensed family child care centers. The purpose of the program is to promote the health, safety, and welfare of children in licensed child care. The Lead Agency ensures that licensing requirements are met through ongoing inspections of child care facilities. Under Wisconsin law, no person may provide care and supervision for four or more children under the age of seven for less than 24 hours a day unless that person obtains a license to operate a child care center from the Department. This does not include a relative or guardian of a child who provides care and supervision for the child; a public or parochial school; a person employed to come to the home of the child's parent.

- iii. Provide the citation:

Wis. Statutes, s. 48.65, DCF 250.02, DCF 250.03(9), DCF 250.11(1)

- [] c. In-home care (care in the child's own) (if applicable):

- i. Identify the providers subject to licensing:

N/A

- ii. Describe the licensing requirements:

N/A

- iii. Provide the citation:

N/A

5.1.2 CCDF Eligible Providers Exempt from Licensing Requirement

Identify the CCDF-eligible providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. Describe exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption. Describe how such exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children (658E (c)(2)(F); 98.40(a)(2)). Do not include exempt relative care providers, this information will be collected in Section 5.6.

- a. License-exempt center-based child care. Describe and provide the citation by answering the questions below.

- i. Identify the CCDF-eligible center-based child care providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. Describe the exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption: **Public School-Operated Child Care Programs are exempt from licensure, however, Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251 in order to be CCDF eligible. All child care programs operated or contracted by a public school that wish to be eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy payments must be monitored annually by the Lead Agency for compliance with a subset of the Administrative Code DCF 251. Provide the citation to this policy: Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14).**
- ii. Provide the citation to this policy: **Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14)**
- iii. Describe how the exemptions for these CCDF-eligible providers do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children.

Wis. Statutes, s. 48.65 does not require licensure for any of the following; however, these child care arrangements are not CCDF-eligible: (a) A parent, grandparent, great grandparent, stepparent, brother, sister, first cousin, nephew, niece, uncle, or aunt of a child, whether by blood, marriage, or legal adoption, who provides care and supervision for the child. (am) A guardian of a child who provides care and supervision for the child. (b) A public or parochial school or a tribal school. (c) A person employed to come to the home of the child's parent or guardian for less than 24 hours a day. (d) A county, city, village, town, school district or library that provides programs primarily intended for recreational or social purposes. Public School Board powers under s. 120.13 (14), Wis. Stats., states in pertinent part that school boards may establish and provide or contract for the provision of child care programs for children. Child care programs established under this subsection shall meet the standards for licensed child care centers [DCF 251 Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers] established by the department of children and families. The Lead Agency annually monitors public school operated programs, that are CCDF-eligible, for compliance with a subset of the licensing rules under DCF 251.

b. License-exempt family child care. Describe and provide the citation by answering the questions below.

- i. Identify the CCDF-eligible family child care providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. Describe the exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption:

A family child care provider who provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours per day for no more than three children under age seven is not required to obtain a license/regulation. Under Wis. Statutes, s. 48.65 this form of child care is exempt from licensure/regulation. However, family child care providers may choose to obtain child care certification in order to be CCDF-eligible.

- ii. Provide the citation to this policy:

WI Stats s. 48.651 and DCF 202

- iii. Describe how the exemptions for these CCDF-eligible providers do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children.

Public School Board powers under s. 120.13 (14), Wis. Stats., shall meet the standards for licensed child care centers [DCF 251 Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers] established by the department of children and families in order to be CCDF eligible. The Lead Agency annually monitors public school operated programs, that are CCDF-eligible, for compliance with a subset of the licensing health and safety rules under DCF 251.

c. In-home care (care in the child's own home by a non-relative): Describe and provide the citation by answering the questions below.

- i. Identify the CCDF-eligible in-home child care (care in the child's own home by a non- relative) providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. Describe the exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption.

☑Certified in-home child care operator☑ means a certified child care operator who provides care in the child's home for a family that is eligible for in-home care through the child care subsidy program under s. DCF 201.039 (5). In-home care must be certified if a family meets eligibility requirements for a child care subsidy. Certification standards found in Wis. Admin. Code DCF 202 identify the health and safety standards that apply to certified in-home care When a

certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children’s own home, the certified operator is not required to comply with group size or age grouping restrictions, however, the operator may not care for any children who do not reside in the home.

- ii. Provide the citation to this policy:

WI Stat. s. 48.65

- iii. Describe how the exemptions for these CCDF-eligible providers do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children.

Wis. Statutes, s. 48.651 and DCF 202 establish standards for the certification of persons who provide child care for one to three children under age seven unrelated to the provider, or who are not otherwise required to be licensed as a child care center under s. 48.65, Stats. Certified in-home family child care providers are CCDF-eligible. DCF 202 also establishes standards for local counties and tribes that administer child care certification, including in-home family child care.

5.2 Standards for Ratios, Group Size and Qualifications for CCDF Providers

Lead Agencies are required to have child care standards for providers receiving CCDF funds, appropriate to the type of child care setting involved, that address appropriate ratios between the number of children and number of providers in terms of the age of the children, group size limits for specific age populations, and the required qualifications for providers (658E(c)(2)(H); 98.41(d); 98.16(m)). For ease of responding, this section is organized by CCDF categories of care, licensing status, and age categories. Respondents should map their Lead Agency categories of care to the CCDF categories. Exemptions for relative providers will be addressed in subsection 5.6.

5.2.1 Age classifications definitions

Describe how the state/territory defines the following age classifications. For instance, Infant: 0-18 months.

- a. Infant. Describe:

Birth to 12 months

- b. Toddler. Describe:

12 months to 24 months

- c. Preschool. Describe:

2 to 5 years

- d. School-Age. Describe:

5 years and older

5.2.2 Ratio and group size for settings and age groups

To demonstrate continued compliance, provide the ratio and group size for settings and age groups below.

- a. Licensed CCDF center-based care:

- i. Infant

- A. Ratio:

1:4 - An infant is defined as a child birth to 12 months.

Children under 2 years of age (infants & toddlers) must have a minimum staff to child ratio of 1:4 in a licensed group child care program.

B. Group size:

Maximum group size for children birth to 2 years, in center-based group child care is 8.

Children under 2 years (infants & toddlers) must have a ratio of no less than 1 worker to 4 children with a maximum number of 8 children in a group. If more than 4 children under age 2 are present a 2nd qualified caregiver is required.

**When there is a mixed-age group, the required staff-to-child ratios shall be adjusted on a pro rata basis in accordance with the ages of the children in the group:
(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>. When infants and toddlers are part of a mixed-age group, the group size may not exceed 8, regardless of the ages of the other children in the group.**

ii. Toddler

A. Ratio:

1:4 ☐ A toddler is defined as a child 12 months to 2 years.

Children ages 12 months to 2 years must have a minimum staff to child ratio of 1:4 in a licensed center-based group child care program.

B. Group size:

Maximum group size is 8.

Children in center-based group child care, ages 12 months to 2 years must have a minimum staff to child ratio of 1:4 with a maximum number of 8 children in a group.

**When there is a mixed-age group, the required staff-to-child ratios shall be adjusted on a pro rata basis in accordance with the ages of the children in the group:
(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>. When infants and toddlers are part of a mixed-age group, the group size may not exceed 8, regardless of the ages of the other children in the group.**

iii. Preschool

A. Ratio:

Preschool is defined as a children ages 2 to 5 years.

Children 2 years to 2½ years must have a minimum staff to child ratio of 1:6 in a licensed center-based group child care program.

Children 2½ years to 3 years must have a minimum staff to child ratio of 1:8.

Children 3 to 4 years must have minimum staff to child ratio of 1:10.

Children 4 years to 5 years must have minimum of staff to child ratio of 1:13.

When there is a mixed-age group, the required staff-to-child ratios shall be adjusted on a pro rata basis in accordance with the ages of the children in the group:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>

B. Group size:

Maximum group size in a center-based child care program is based on ages of children in care.

2 years to 2 ½ years maximum group size is 12

2 ½ years to 3 years maximum group size is 16

3 years to 4 years maximum group size is 20

4 years to 5 years maximum group size is 26

When there is a mixed-age group, the required staff-to-child ratios shall be adjusted on a pro rata basis in accordance with the ages of the children in the group:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>

iv. School-Age

A. Ratio:

School age is defined as children age 5 years and older.

Children ages 5 to 6 years require a minimum staff to child ratio 1:17.

Children 6 years and older require a minimum staff to child ratio 1:18.

B. Group size:

Children 5 to 6 years must have minimum ratio of 1:17 with max group size of 34.

Children 6 years and older must have minimum ratio of 1:18 and max group size of 36.

When there is a mixed-age group, the required staff-to-child ratios shall be adjusted on a pro rata basis in accordance with the ages of the children in the group:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>

v. Mixed-Age Groups (if applicable)

A. Ratio:

Staff-to-child ratio shall be adjusted on a pro rata basis, according to age. The Lead Agency utilizes a mixed age child care worksheet that assigns a numerical weight for the number of children in a particular age group. One staff member is required for a group of children whose total numerical weight equals 1.04 or less. (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>

B. Group size:

When infants and toddlers are in the group the maximum group size may not exceed eight. When the group is made up of all school-age children (ages 5+) the maximum group size may not exceed 36. When there is a mixed-age group, the required staff-to-child ratios shall be adjusted on a pro rata basis in accordance with the ages of the children in the group: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/0078.pdf> This form is voluntary but may be used to calculate weight and the maximum number of children in a group. When children ages 2 years and older are cared for in a mixed-age group, the maximum groups size may not exceed that which can be cared for by 2 caregivers. If the pro-rata calculation requires more than 2 caregivers, children must be cared for in separate groups.(DCF 251.05(2)(e))

vi. If any of the responses above are different for exempt child care centers, describe the ratio and group size requirements for license-exempt providers.

There are no differences.

b. Licensed CCDF family child care home providers:

i. Mixed-Age Groups

A. Ratio:

The maximum number of children that one provider may care for is specified in Table 250.055 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cclicensing/commentary/250-055.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cclicensing/commentary/250-055.pdf>. If the size of the group or the age distribution of the children exceeds the number that may be served by one provider, an additional qualified provider shall be present. The maximum group size is reduced to six if four or more children present are under age two. For example, if there are two providers, and the entire group is under 2 years, the max group size is 8. If there is only one provider with 4 children under 2 years, the max group size is 6.

B. Group size:

At no time may more than eight children be in the care of the licensed family child care program. The maximum number of children that one provider may care for is specified in Table 250.055 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cclicensing/commentary/250-055.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cclicensing/commentary/250-055.pdf> .

If the size of the group or the age distribution of the children exceeds the number that may be served by one provider, an additional qualified provider shall be present.

The maximum group size is reduced to six if four or more children present are under age two. For example, if there are two providers, and the entire group is under 2 years, the max group size is 8. If there is only one provider with 4 children under 2 years, the max group size is 6.

ii. Infant (if applicable)

A. Ratio:

An infant is defined as a child birth to 12 months. Children under 2 years of age require a staff to child ratio of 1:4. If the size of the group or the age distribution of the children exceeds the number that may be served by one provider, an additional qualified provider shall be present.

At no time may more than eight children be in the care of the licensed family child care program.

The maximum number of children that one provider may care for is specified in Table 250.055 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cclicensing/commentary/250-055.pdf>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cclicensing/commentary/250-055.pdf>.

The maximum group size is reduced to six if four or more children present are under age two. For example, if there are two providers, and the entire group is under 2 years, the max group size is 8. If there is only one provider with 4 children under 2 years, the max group size is 6.

B. Group size:

At no time may more than 8 children be in the care of the licensed family child care program. The maximum number of children that one provider may care for is specified in Table 250.055 (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cclicensing/commentary/250-055.pdf>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cclicensing/commentary/250-055.pdf>.

The maximum group size is reduced to six if four or more children present are under age two. For example, if there are two providers, and the entire group is under 2 years, the max group size is 8.

If there is only one provider with 4 children under 2 years, the max group size is 6.

iii. Toddler (if applicable)

A. Ratio:

Toddler is defined as children 12 months to 2 years. Licensed family child care programs have a minimum staff to child ratio of 1 to 4 for children under age 2.

B. Group size:

Licensed family child care programs have a maximum group size of 8, however, the group size is limited dependent up on the ages and numbers of children in care, as specified in Table DCF 250.055 - (https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/DCF/201_252/250.pdf#page=7) https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/DCF/201_252/250.pdf#page=7. For example, if there are two providers, and the entire group is under 2 years, the max group size is 8. If there is only one provider with 4 children under 2 years, the max group size is 6.

iv. Preschool (if applicable)

A. Ratio:

Preschool is defined as children 2 to 5 years. If there are no infants/toddlers present the minimum staff to child ratio for children ages 2 and older is 1 to 8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See

table 250.055. (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf>

B. Group size:

Preschool is defined as children 2 to 5 years. If there are no infants/toddlers present the minimum staff to child ratio for children ages 2 and older is 1 to 8 with a maximum group size of 8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See table 250.055. ([http://Preschool is defined as children 2 to 5 years. If there are no infants/toddlers present the minimum staff to child ratio for children ages 2 and older is 1 to 8 with a maximum group size of 8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See table 250.055. <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf>\)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf>](http://Preschool is defined as children 2 to 5 years. If there are no infants/toddlers present the minimum staff to child ratio for children ages 2 and older is 1 to 8 with a maximum group size of 8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See table 250.055. https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf)

v. School-Age (if applicable)

A. Ratio:

School-age is defined as children age 5 and older. Children ages 5 and older require a staff to child ratio of 1:8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See table 250.055. ([http://School-age is defined as children age 5 and older. Children ages 5 and older require a staff to child ratio of 1:8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See table 250.055. <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf>\)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf>](http://School-age is defined as children age 5 and older. Children ages 5 and older require a staff to child ratio of 1:8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See table 250.055. https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf)

B. Group size:

School-age is defined as children age 5 and older. Children ages 5 and older require a staff to child ratio of 1:8 with a maximum group size of 8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See table 250.055. ([http://School-age is defined as children age 5 and older. Children ages 5 and older require a staff to child ratio of 1:8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See table 250.055. <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf>\)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf>](http://School-age is defined as children age 5 and older. Children ages 5 and older require a staff to child ratio of 1:8. However, if children under age 2 are present, this reduces the number of children age 2 and older that may be in care. See table 250.055. https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/203.pdf)

vi. If any of the responses above are different for exempt child care homes, describe the ratio and group size requirements for license-exempt family child care home providers.

Licensed exempt family child care providers who are certified may not care for more than 3 children under the age of 7, with a maximum group size of 6 children. The maximum number of children in care may be reduced depending on the number of children under age 2 present. The maximum group size is shown in table 202.08(6) here:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cccertification/4-numbers-chart.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cccertification/4-numbers-chart.pdf> or
(https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/DCF/201_252/202.pdf)
https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/DCF/201_252/202.pdf

c. Licensed in-home care (care in the child's own home):

i. Mixed-Age Groups (if applicable)

A. Ratio:

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

In Wisconsin, "in-home" care is only allowable for certified providers if DCF Administrative Rule 202 requirements are met:

(e) When a certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the following apply:

No certified family child care operator may have more than 3 children under 7 years of age who are not related to the child care operator in care at any given time, and

No certified family operator may have more than 6 children in care.

DCF Publication P-2436 - Your Guide to Regulated Child Care (Your summary of the child care rules) (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/2436.pdf>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/2436.pdf>

Types of regulated child care programs in Wisconsin:

A program regulated under DCF 250 where a person provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours per day to between 4 and 8 children under 7 years of age

A program regulated under DCF 202 where a person provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours per day for no more than 3 children under age 7 with a maximum group size of 6, including the provider's own children under age 7.

Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

B. Group size:

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

In Wisconsin, "in-home" care is only allowable for certified providers if DCF Administrative Rule 202 requirements are met:

(e) When a certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the following apply:

No certified family child care operator may have more than 3 children under 7 years of age who are not related to the child care operator in care at any given time, and

No certified family operator may have more than 6 children in care.

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Types of regulated child care programs in Wisconsin:

A program regulated under DCF 250 where a person provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours per day to between 4 and 8 children under 7 years of age

A program regulated under DCF 251 where a person for less than 24 hours per day provides care and supervision for 9 or more children

A program regulated under DCF 202 where a person provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours per day for no more than 3 children under age 7 with a maximum group size of 6, including the provider's own children under age 7.

Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

ii. Infant (if applicable)

A. Ratio:

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

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Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

B. Group size:

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

In Wisconsin, "in-home" care is only allowable for certified providers if DCF Administrative Rule 202 requirements are met:

(e) When a certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the following apply:

No certified family child care operator may have more than 3 children under 7 years of age who are not related to the child care operator in care at any given time, and

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Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

iii. Toddler (if applicable)

A. Ratio:

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

In Wisconsin, "in-home" care is only allowable for certified providers if DCF Administrative Rule 202 requirements are met:

(e) When a certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the following apply:

No certified family child care operator may have more than 3 children under 7 years of age who are not related to the child care operator in care at any given time, and

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Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

B. Group size:

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

In Wisconsin, "in-home" care is only allowable for certified providers if DCF Administrative Rule 202 requirements are met:

(e) When a certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the following apply:

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Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

iv. **Preschool (if applicable)**

A. **Ratio:**

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

In Wisconsin, "in-home" care is only allowable for certified providers if DCF Administrative Rule 202 requirements are met:

(e) When a certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the following apply:

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Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

B. Group size:

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

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A program regulated under DCF 202 where a person provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours per day for no more than 3 children under age 7 with a maximum group size of 6, including the provider's own children under age 7.

Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

v. School-Age (if applicable)

A. Ratio:

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

In Wisconsin, "in-home" care is only allowable for certified providers if DCF Administrative Rule 202 requirements are met:

(e) When a certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the following apply:

No certified family child care operator may have more than 3 children under 7 years of age who are not related to the child care operator in care at any given time, and

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A program regulated under DCF 202 where a person provides care and supervision for less than 24 hours per day for no more than 3 children under age 7 with a maximum group size of 6, including the provider's own children under age 7.

Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

B. Group size:

Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

In Wisconsin, "in-home" care is only allowable for certified providers if DCF Administrative Rule 202 requirements are met:

(e) When a certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the following apply:

No certified family child care operator may have more than 3 children under 7 years of age who are not related to the child care operator in care at any given time, and

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Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

- vi. Describe the ratio and group size requirements for license-exempt in-home care.
Wisconsin CCDF State Plan Amendment Language for Regulated Provider In-Home Care and Staff to Child Ratios:

In Wisconsin, "in-home" care is only allowable for certified providers if DCF Administrative Rule 202 requirements are met:

(e) When a certified in-home child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the following apply:

No certified family child care operator may have more than 3 children under 7 years of age who are not related to the child care operator in care at any given time, and

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Grouping of children.

(a) The maximum number of children in a group may not exceed the number specified in Table 251.055.

The above link can be used to see Table DCF 251.055 which outlines the maximum ratio for licensed Group Child Care Centers.

5.2.3 Teacher/caregiver qualifications

Provide the teacher/caregiver qualifications for each category of care.

a. Licensed Center-Based Care

- i. Describe the teacher qualifications for licensed CCDF center-based care, including any variations based on the ages of children in care:

Minimum age for infant lead teachers is 18. Minimum qualifications for teachers are two non-credit Lead Agency approved courses. Individuals working with children under two years of age must have ten hours of training in the care of infants and toddlers including safe sleep practices. Individuals caring for children under age one must complete training in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). All persons working with children under five years of age need training in Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS)/Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) prevention. Training requirements and qualifications are outlined in detail here:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/66.pdf>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/66.pdf>. Non-credit approved courses must be provided by Lead Agency-approved agencies. Students must demonstrate competency and understanding in the subject matter before a certificate of completion is issued. Providers must also complete training on infant/child CPR, first aid, and child abuse and neglect.

- ii. Describe the director qualification for licensed CCDF center-based care, including any variations based on the ages of children in care or the number of staff employed:

License-exempt (certified) in-home family child care providers must be at least 18 years of age and need to complete one three-credit course in early childhood education or a Lead Agency approved non-credit course in early childhood education, and a non-credit Lead Agency approved course in the business of operating a family child care program. They also need training safe sleep practices (if caring for infants under 1 year of age), training in SBS/AHT prevention (if caring for children under 5 years of age), Infant/Child CPR, first aid, and child abuse and neglect.

- iii. If any of the responses above are different for license-exempt child care centers, describe which requirements apply to exempt centers:

Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements and qualifications.

- iv. If applicable, provide the website link detailing the center-based teacher and director qualifications.

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/66.pdf>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/66.pdf>

b. Licensed Family Child Care

- i. Describe the provider qualifications for licensed family child care homes, including any variations based on the ages of children in care:

Family child care providers must be at least 18 years of age and are required to complete one three-credit course in early childhood education or a Lead Agency-approved noncredit course in early childhood and a non-credit Lead Agency-approved course in the business of operating a family child care program. If caring for infants and toddlers, family child care providers also need ten hours of training in the care of infants and toddlers, including safe sleep practices (if caring for infants under 1 year

of age) and training in SBS/AHT prevention (if caring for children under 5 years of age). Non-credit approved courses must be provided by Lead Agency-approved agencies. Students must demonstrate competency and understanding in the subject matter before a certificate of completion is issued. Providers must also complete training in infant/child CPR, first aid, and child abuse and neglect.

- ii. If any of the responses above are different for license-exempt family child care homes, describe which requirements apply to exempt homes:

License-exempt family child care providers must be at least 18 years of age and need to complete one three-credit course in early childhood education or a Lead Agency-approved non-credit course in early childhood education, and a non-credit Lead Agency-approved course in the business of operating a family child care program. They also need training in safe sleep practices, SBS/AHT prevention, Infant/Child CPR, first aid, and child abuse and neglect.

- iii. If applicable, provide the website link detailing the family child care home provider qualifications:

**(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cccertification/training>)
<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cccertification/training>**

c. Regulated or registered In-home Care (care in the child’s own home by a non-relative)

- i. Describe the qualifications for licensed in-home child care providers (care in the child’s own home) including any variations based on the ages of children in care:

License-exempt (certified) in-home family child care providers must be at least 18 years of age and need to complete one three-credit course in early childhood education or a Lead Agency approved non-credit course in early childhood education, and a non-credit Lead Agency approved course in the business of operating a family child care program. They also need training safe sleep practices if caring for children under 1 year of age, training in SBS/AHT prevention if caring for children under 5 years of age Infant/Child CPR, first aid, and child abuse and neglect.

- ii. If any of the responses above are different for license-exempt in-home care providers, describe which requirements apply to exempt in-home care providers:

License-exempt (certified) in-home family child care providers must be at least 18 years of age and need to complete one three-credit course in early childhood education or a Lead Agency approved non-credit course in early childhood education, and a non-credit Lead Agency approved course in the business of operating a family child care program. They also need training safe sleep practices, training in SBS/AHT prevention, Infant/Child CPR, first aid, and child abuse and neglect.

5.3 Health and Safety Standards and Training for CCDF Providers

The state/territory must describe its requirements for pre-service or orientation training and ongoing training. Lead Agencies are required to have minimum pre-service or orientation training requirements (to be completed within 3 months), as appropriate to the provider setting and the age of children served. This training must address the required health and safety topics (658E(c)(2)(l)(i) and the content area of child development. Lead Agencies have flexibility in determining the number of training hours to require, and they may consult with Caring for our Children Basics for best practices and the recommended time needed to address these training requirements.

Lead Agencies must also have ongoing training requirements for caregivers, teachers, and directors who are caring for children receiving CCDF funds (658E(c)(2)(I)(i); 98.44(b)(1)(iii)). Lead Agencies are to report the total number of ongoing training hours that are required each year, but they do not have to report these hours out by topic (658E(c)(2)(G)(iii)). Ongoing training requirements will be addressed in 5.3.13.

Both preservice/orientation and ongoing trainings should be a part of a broader systematic approach and progression of professional development (as described in section 6) within a state/territory.

States and territories must have health and safety **standards** for programs (e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, etc.) serving children receiving CCDF assistance relating to the required health and safety topics as appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served (98.41(a)). This requirement is applicable to all child care programs receiving CCDF funds regardless of licensing status (i.e., licensed or license-exempt). The only exception to this requirement is for relative providers, as defined in 98.2. Lead Agencies have the option of exempting relatives from some or all CCDF health and safety requirements (98.42(c)). Exemptions for relative providers' standards and training requirements will be addressed in question 5.6.3.

To certify, describe the following health and safety requirements for programs serving children receiving CCDF assistance on the following topics (98.16(l)) identified in questions 5.3.1 – 5.3.12. Note: Monitoring and enforcement will be addressed in subsection 5.4.

5.3.1 Prevention and control of infectious diseases

Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations) health and safety standards and training requirements.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

Providers are required to have documentation of a child's immunization history on file at the program. There are standards that address handwashing, universal precautions, diapering, care of mildly ill children, and other infection control measures included as part of the licensing rules and license-exempt family and in-home family child care rules.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
Specific infection control measures apply when children are diapered.
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is(are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

**Communicable Disease: DCF 250.04 (3)(m), DCF 251.07 (6)(e), DCF 202.08(4)(k).
Immunization Record: DCF 250.04(6)(a)4m, DCF 251.04 (6)(a)6m., DCF 202.08(4)(e).
Handwashing: 250.07 (6)(g), 251.07(6)(i), DCF 202.08(4)(g)&(h). Universal & Other Health Precautions: DCF 250.07(6)(g)&(h), DCF 250.09(4), DCF 251.07(6)(g), DCF 251.09(4), DCF 202.08(4)(i), DCF 202.08(4)(o).**

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for these training requirements, including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(a), DCF 251.05(3), and pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(2), DCF 250.05(4)(a)10. License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b) and DCF 202.08(1)(b)3. Ongoing: Wis. Admin. Code DCF 202, 250 and 251 do not require a specific number of ongoing training related to infectious disease prevention and control. Continuing education hours must in one of the qualified health and safety subject areas, one of which is prevention and control of infectious diseases. Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.a; Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.a; License-exempt family: DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.a. The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Licensing administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved pre-service training that includes specified health and safety topics before work commences. Specific health and safety topics are covered during the individual's orientation period. In group child care settings the orientation must take place within the individual's first week at the center. In licensed family child care the orientation must take place prior to an individual working with children. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules DCF 202 require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics within three months of work commencing.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below how the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system alerts, social media, and newsletters). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.2 Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome

Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

Before work commences, caregivers working in licensed and license-exempt programs who provide care and supervision to children under one (1) year of age are required to complete training in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome risk reduction. Licensing rules and license-exempt family child care rules require children under age one to be placed to sleep on their backs in a safe crib. A child under one year of age may not sleep in a crib or playpen that contains soft or loose materials, such as sheepskins, pillows, blankets, flat sheets, bumper pads, bibs, pacifiers with attached soft objects, or stuffed animals. No blankets or other items may be hung on the sides of a crib or playpen. There is no specific training requirement related to safe sleep for children who are age one or older, however, there are health and safety standards for rest/sleep of children of all ages. Each child one year of age and older who has a nap or rest period shall be provided with a sleeping surface that is clean, safe, washable, and placed at least 2 feet from the nearest sleeping child. Sleeping surfaces may be placed end-to-end if a solid partition separates child and an aisle not less than 2 feet in width is maintained between sleeping surfaces. The sleeping surface shall be any of the following: a bed, cot, padded mat, sleeping bag or a crib or playpen. Bedding shall be maintained and stored in a clean and sanitary manner, replaced immediately if wet or soiled, and washed after every 5 uses at a minimum. A crib or playpen shall be washed and disinfected between changes in occupancy.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.

Standards apply with caring for children under one (1) year of age.

- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is(are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Wis. Statutes, s. 48.67(1); Wis. Admin. Code DCF 250.05 (3)(c) and (4)(a)5., DCF 250.09 (1)(c) and (2), DCF 251.05 (4)(a)14., DCF 251.09 (1)(j), (k), (L) and (2)(bm), DCF 202.08(1)(b) and (11).

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for this training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (4)(a)14 Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (4)(a)5. License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b); Wis. Admin. Code DCF 202.08 (1)(b)1. Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(a)14 and (c)7. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(4)(a)5. and (c)1. License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.08(1)(b)1. and 5.b., Wis. Statutes, s.48.651(1d)(b)2.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

N/A

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead-Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead-Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available

to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.3 Administration of medication

Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

Licensing rules specify that all medication (prescription and OTC) must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name and dosing instructions. Parental authorization is required. Medication administration must be logged in the center medical log book. License-exempt family child care rules require medication to be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, dosage, and administration directions; and a provider may administer medication if the child's parent has given written and signed permission to administer the medication to the child as directed on the label. Logging administration in a medical log book is not required.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care. **License-exempt family child care rules require medication to be in the original container and labeled with the child's name, dosage, and administration directions; and a provider may administer medication if the child's parent has given written and signed permission to administer the medication to the child as directed on the label. Logging administration in a medical log book is not required.**
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is(are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Licensed: DCF 250.07 (6)(b)3.c., DCF 251.07 (6)(dm)3.d. Licensed-exempt family: DCF 202.08 (4)(f). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards under DCF 251.

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (4)(a) 1., 2. and 6., DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.b. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (4)(a)4., 13. and 14., DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.b. License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b), DCF 202.08(1)(b)4. and 5. Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(a)6., DCF

251.05(4)(c)7.b. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(4)(a)11 and (c)1.b. License-Exempt: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651(1d)(b)2, DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.c.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Licensing administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved pre-service training that includes specified health and safety topics before work commences. Providers. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics within three months of commencing work.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below how the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.4 Prevention and response to food and allergic reactions.

Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

In licensed and license-exempt care, parents complete a health history form for each child in care that details any food or other allergies, including a care plan for the child. Information on food allergies is shared with the cook and anyone else caring for children. The health history and emergency care plan form used in licensed care is located at: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/2345.pdf>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/2345.pdf>. The enrollment form used in certified care is located at: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/13251.pdf>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/13251.pdf>. Each employee, volunteer, or substitute shall receive an orientation before the individual begins to work with children in care. The orientation shall be documented on a form prescribed by the department and kept in the employee file and shall cover several topics including specific information relating to each child's health care needs, including medications, disabilities, or special health conditions and a review of the center's procedures for dealing with emergencies, including natural disasters, human-caused events, food emergencies, and allergic reactions. Each center shall have a written plan for taking appropriate action in the event of an emergency including allergic reactions. The policy checklist outlines the requirements for a licensee to develop and implement written plans, policies and procedures that cover several topics:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/2048.pdf>

- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
N/A
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Licensed: DCF 250.04(6)(a)4., DCF 251.07 (5)(a) 9m. and 10, (6)(k)5., Licensed-exempt family: DCF 202.08 (4m), and (12)(f).

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (4)(a)1., 2., and 4. And DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.c. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: 250.05 (4)(a)7 and (c)1.c. License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b)., DCF 202.08(1)(b)4., DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.d., DCF 202.08(4m)(e). Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.c. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.c; License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651(1d)(b)2, DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.d.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training

requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Licensing administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved pre-service training that includes specified health and safety topics before work commences. Providers. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics within three months of work commencing.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead-Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.5 Building and physical premises safety

Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

Licensing rules and license-exempt family child care rules cover building and premises

safety. Buildings must comply with all applicable codes and the building and premises must be in compliance with safety standards. **☒Hazard☒** means a potential source of harm that can jeopardize the health, safety or well-being of children in care. A child care program shall develop and implement a written orientation program that all new employees, substitutes, and regular volunteers shall complete and document within their first week at the center. The orientation program shall cover several topics including building and physical premises safety, including identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic. The indoor and outdoor premises shall be free of hazards including any recalled products. An off-premises outdoor play space shall be free of hazards such as bodies of water, railroad tracks, unfenced in-ground swimming pools, heavily wooded areas and nearby highways and main thoroughfares.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care. **Because family child care is usually located in a home setting, the licensing rules and license-exempt family child care rules incorporate the applicable building codes. Group child care centers and license-exempt, public school operated programs must comply with the applicable commercial building codes. License-exempt care provided in a child's home is exempt from several family child care rules related to the physical premises as found in Wis. Admin. Code DCF 202.08 (3). Programs serving school-age children in school buildings are exempt from the requirement for documentation of compliance with the commercial building codes.**
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

i.Licensed Family: DCF 250.06 (1), (2), (7), (11) Licensed Group: DCF 251.06 (1), (2), (11) Licensed-exempt Family: DCF 202.08 (2).

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (4)(a)1., 2., 17., DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.d., e., Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (4)(a)12. and 14, (c)7.d and e. License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b), DCF 202.08(1)(b)4. and 5.e Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.d.,e., and g. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements. Licensed Family: 250.05(4)(c)1.d., e., and g; License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651(1d)(b)2, DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.e.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Licensing administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved pre-

service training that includes specified health and safety topics before work commences. Providers. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics within 3 months of commencing work.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title).

5.3.6 Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

All persons working with children under age five are required to have Lead Agency approved training in child abuse and neglect and Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS)/Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) Prevention prior to working with children. A certificate of completion used to document the required SBS/AHT prevention training must contain all of the following: printed (typed) name of student; printed (typed) name of training agency; printed (typed) date the training was completed; printed (typed) name of approved trainer; printed (typed) name of training; and signature of trainer. Department-approved training in the prevention of shaken baby syndrome is included in the department-approved non-credit courses called Introduction to the Child Care Profession and Fundamentals of Infant and Toddler or the credit-based course called Health, Safety and Nutrition offered by a Wisconsin technical college, if the course was taken after 7/1/05. Licensing and certification workers monitor for compliance with

training requirements as part of their monitoring of staff files. All providers and substitutes working in licensed and licensed exempt programs operated by public schools shall receive training every two years in child abuse and neglect laws, how to identify children who have been abused or neglected, and the procedure for ensuring that all known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect are immediately reported to the proper authorities.

Through the licensing process providers are notified of the requirement to implement the required training. For example, this requirement is outlined through the DCF Licensing Administrative Rules, is part of the licensing monitoring process to ensure that all staff have received the required training, and applicants for licensure also sign a statement that includes: acknowledgment of having received the Licensing Rules and accept legal responsibility for complying with all administrative rules as promulgated by the department under the authority of s. 48.67, Wis. Stats. "By signature, I signify a willingness to provide the department's licensing agency with information to verify whether or not the requirements for a license are met and further authorize the department to make such investigation as is necessary for verification of these factors, including access to the premises any time during licensed hours."

- ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care. **SBS/AHT Prevention Training requirements apply only when the provider cares for children under the age of five years.**
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (3)(g), DCF 250.07 (2), DCF 250.04(8), Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (3)(b), DCF 251.07 (2), DCF 251.04(8) Licensed-exempt family: DCF 202.08 (1)(b), DCF 202.08 (7), (DCF 202.08 (14)), and Wis. Stats. 48.651(1d). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards under DCF 251.

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (3)(b). Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (3)(g). License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b), DCF 202.08(1)(b)2, DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.f. Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(3)(b), DCF 251.05(4)(c). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are

required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(3)(g), DCF 250.05(4)(c); License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.08(1)(b)2., DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.f., and Wis. Statutes, s.48.651(1d)(b)2.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

N/A

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead-Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead-Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.7 Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning

Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event (such as violence at a child care facility), within the meaning of those terms under section 602(a)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5195a(a)(1)). Emergency preparedness and response planning (at the child care provider level) must also include procedures for evacuation; relocation; shelter-in- place and lockdown; staff and volunteer training and practice drills; communications and reunification with families; continuity of operations; and accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions.

- a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

Definition of Emergency in Administrative Code: Emergency means unforeseen circumstances that require immediate attention. Administrative Code: DCF 202, 250, 251 all require each center to have a written plan for taking appropriate action in the event of an emergency, including a fire, a tornado, a flood; extreme heat or cold; a loss of building services, including no heat, water, electricity, or telephone; human-caused events, such as threats to the building or its occupants; allergic reactions; lost or missing children; vehicle accidents; or other circumstances requiring immediate attention. The plan shall include specific procedures that address all of the following: 1. Evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lock-down; 2. Ensuring that the needs of children under age two and children with disabilities are met; 3. Communication with parents; 4. Connecting children with their parents if the center is required to evacuate the building. Additional standards in DCF 251 licensed group centers, include, but are not limited to: Post the fire evacuation route and tornado shelter areas; Practice the fire evacuation plan monthly, and tornado drills monthly from April through October; Ensure that all staff members know what their duties are if there is an emergency; Keep a written record of dates and times all fire and tornado drills practiced. Additional standards in DCF 202 Licensed-exempt family and DCF 250 - Licensed family, include but are not limited to: The home shall have a list of emergency numbers posted in a location known to all providers, including the numbers for the police, fire station, emergency medical care, child protective services agency, and poison control center; The center shall have a written plan reviewed by the department for ensuring supervision of the children in an emergency or during a provider's absence; Smoke detectors shall be installed and maintained in operating condition on each level of the center and in all areas used for nap or rest periods; All smoke detectors shall be tested monthly and a record kept of the time, date, and results of the test. Additional resources can be found on the Lead Agency's website: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccregulation/emergencyprep>

- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
N/A

- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(2)(h)9 DCF 251.05(3)(j)3 DCF 251.05(4)(a)3 DCF 251.05(4)(c)6.f. DCF 251.06(2)(f) DCF 251.06(3) DCF 251.06(4) DCF 251.10(4). **Licensed Family:** DCF 250.05(4)(a) & (b), DCF 250.05(4)(c)1, DCF 250.055(1)(g), DCF 250.06(2)(d), DCF 250.06(3), DCF 250.06(4), DCF 250.06(7)(a) & (b), DCF 250.10(4)(a) & (b). **Licensed-exempt Family:** DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.g, DCF 202.08(4m). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251.

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (4)(a)1., 2. and 3. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (4)(a)7. and 14. License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b)., DCF 202.08(1)(b)4. and 5.g. and DCF 202.08(4m)(e). Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.f. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(4)(c)1; f License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.g, Wis. Statutes, s.48.651(1d)(b)2.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Licensing administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved pre-service training that includes specified health and safety topics before work commences. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics within three months of commencing work.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of

Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.8 Handling and Storage of Hazardous Materials

Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants.

a. Storage

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

☒Hazard☒ means a potential source of harm, including a recalled product, that could jeopardize the health, safety, or well-being of children in care. Licensing rules and license-exempt family child care rules require that all materials harmful to children must be stored in properly labeled containers and stored in areas that are inaccessible to children. Administrative rules also address universal precautions and handling of materials contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids. Disposable soiled diapers and gloves, if used, must be placed in a plastic-lined, hands-free, covered container immediately. Place parent-supplied soiled cloth diapers in labeled plastic bags which are kept separate from other clothing. Bodily secretions, such as runny noses, eye drainage, and coughed-up matter shall be wiped with a disposable tissue used once and placed in a plastic-lined container. Single use disposable gloves shall be worn if there is contact with blood-containing bodily fluids or tissue discharges. Gloves shall be discarded in plastic bags. Persons working with children shall wash their hands with soap and warm running water before handling food, before and after assisting with toileting and diapering, after wiping bodily secretions from a child with a disposable tissue, and after exposure to blood or bodily fluids. If gloves are used, hands shall be washed after the removal of gloves.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.

N/A

- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Licensed Group DCF 251.05(4)(a)8. & 18. DCF 251.05(4)(c)6.d., g., & h., DCF 251.06(2)(a) & (d), DCF 251.07(6)(g)5. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(4)(a)12., DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.d., g., & h., DCF 250.06(2)(c), DCF 250.07(6)(g)5. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251.

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (4)(a)1., 2., 8. and 18. and DCF 251.05(4)(c)7. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251.

Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (4)(a)14., (c)1.g. and h. License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s. 48.651 (1d)(b), DCF 202.08(1)(b)4. and 5.h., DCF 202.08(4m)(e)4. and 5. Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.g. & h. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.g. & h., License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.h., Wis. Statutes, s. 48.651(1d)(b)2.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Licensing administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved pre-service training that includes specified health and safety topics before work commences. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics within three months of commencing work.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title).

5.3.9 Precautions in transporting children

Precautions in transporting children (if applicable).

- a. Standard(s) _____

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

Licensing rules and license-exempt family child care rules address the transportation of children, including the use of car safety seats/restraints, permissions and emergency information, requirements for drivers, vehicle safety, vehicle capacity, supervision, and other topics. These rules apply whenever children are transported by the program.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.

N/A

- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Licensed Group: DCF 251.08 Licensed Family: DCF 250.08 Licensed-Exempt Family: DCF 202.08(9). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards under DCF 251.

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirements, including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (4)(a)1. and 2., DCF 251.08(4)(b). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (4)(a) 13. and 14. and DCF 250.08(4)(b). License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b), DCF 202.08(1)(b)4. and 5.i. and DCF 202.08(9)(e). Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.n. and DCF 241.08(4). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.n. DCF 250.08(4), License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.i., Wis. Statutes, s. 48.651(1d)(b)2.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Licensing administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved pre-service training that includes specified health and safety topics before work commences. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics within 3 months of work commencing. Before a driver, who is not the licensee/certified operator, transports children, specific procedures must be reviewed prior to transporting children, including, but not limited to, child abuse and neglect laws and first aid procedures.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
 - Pre-Service
 - Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
 - Yes
 - No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters,). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.10 Pediatric first aid and pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

a. Standards

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

Wisconsin Administrative Code- DCF 250

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/4069.pdf>). Specific rule language includes:

DCF 250.05 - Within 3 months after licensure or date of hire, each licensee and provider shall obtain a certificate of completion for a department-approved course in infant and child cardiopulmonary resuscitation, including training in the use of an automated external defibrillator. The Department of Health Services, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services (BEMS) approves agencies to offer the CPR with Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training as required by statute. See the BEMS website <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ems/licensing/cpr.htm> for a list of currently approved agencies. The training must result in a certificate of completion. If the

certificate does not have a date specifying the length of time for which it is valid, the CPR training must be renewed every year. If the center does not serve infants, the CPR training could be child/adult CPR. Substitutes and volunteers counted in staff-to-child ratio will need to have CPR training by the time they have worked in a center for 240 hours. Emergency back-up providers are not required to have CPR training. 2. Each licensee and provider shall maintain a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification as specified under subd. 1. 3. The time spent obtaining or renewing cardiopulmonary resuscitation training may be counted towards the required continuing education hours under sub. (4) (c). (f) Each licensee and provider shall have satisfactorily completed at least 10 hours of department-approved training in the care of infants and toddlers within 6 months after becoming licensed or working with children in care under 2 years of age.

Additionally, all child care providers and all staff who have contact with children are required to obtain within three months after beginning to work with children and maintain a current certificate of infant/child CPR. First aid practices are covered in the non-credit, Lead Agency-approved course called Introduction to the Child Care Profession taken as part of pre-service training. First aid procedures are required as part of the orientation for group child care centers.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
N/A
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (3)(c) and (4)(a)5 Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(3)(b) and (3)(e) License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.04(3)(b)3.d., DCF 202.08(1)(b)3.d., (1)(b)3.a., (1)(b)4.Wis. Stats., s.48.651 (1d)(b). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards under DCF 251.

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for this training requirement, including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (3)(c) and (4)(a)5. and DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.p. and q. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: Code DCF 250.05 (3)(b) and (3)(e)1., DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.p. and q. License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s. 48.651 (1d)(b), DCF 202.04(3)(b)(3)d., DCF 202.08(1)(b)3.d. Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(4)(a)5., DCF 251.05(3)(c), DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.p. and q. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards,

including training requirements. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (3)(e)1. & 2., DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.p. and q.; License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.04(3)(b)(3)d., DCF 202.08(1)(b)3.d., DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.j. and Wis. Statutes, s.48.651(1d)(b).

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics, including CPR, within three months of commencing work.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.11 Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect

Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect. Note: The description must include a certification that child care providers within the state comply with the child abuse reporting requirements of section 106(b)(2)(B)(i) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(i)).

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs.

Administrative rules require certified operators, licensees, license-exempt, or other providers, who know or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused or neglected to immediately contact the county department of social services, human services, or local law enforcement. Providers in licensed child care programs shall maintain medical log books and include evidence of unusual bruises, contusions, lacerations, or burns received by a child in or out of center care. Child care providers are mandated reporters under Wis. Statutes, s. 48.02 (1) and s. 48.981 (2)(a)18-19. Licensed and license-exempt child care programs/providers must obtain training in the identification of child abuse and neglect and child abuse and neglect reporting procedures. Child abuse and neglect is included in the pre-service, non-credit, Lead Agency-approved training course required for licensed and license-exempt family child care.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.

N/A

- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Wis. Statutes, s. 48.02 (1) and s. 48.981 (2)(a)18.- 19. Licensed Group DCF 251.04 (8), DCF 251.05(4)(a)10., DCF 251.07(6)(a), DCF 251.07(6)(dm); Licensed Family DCF 250.04 (8), DCF 250.05(4)(a)8., DCF 250.07(6)(b)3.a.; License-Exempt Family DCF 202.08(1)(b)3.c., DCF 202.08 (14). Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards under DCF 251.

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for this training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.04 (8)(b), DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.o., DCF 251.08(4)(b)8. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.04(8)(b), DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.o. License Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s.48.651 (1d)(b), DCF 202.08(1)(b)3.c. , DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.k., DCF 202.08(9)(e)7. Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.04(8)(b), DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.o. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s.120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements; Licensed Family: DCF 250.04(8)(b), DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.o.; License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.08(1)(b)3.c., DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.k., Wis. Statutes, s.48.651(1d)(b)2.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e.

licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Licensing administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved pre-service training that includes specified health and safety topics before commencing work. Licensed-group administrative rules, under DCF 251, also requires child abuse and neglect training to be completed in a provider’s orientation during the first week of work. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics within three months of commencing work.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

Pre-Service

Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

Yes

No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.12 Child development

Child Development. Lead Agencies are required to describe in their plan how training addresses child development principles, including the major domains of cognitive, social, emotional, physical development and approaches to learning (98.44(b)(1)(iii)).

a. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Describe the training content and provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s). Include citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers.

The Lead Agency has approved specific non-credit courses that meet entry-level training for child care workers. The courses are competency-based and each approved agency offering a course must ensure that students can demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter before issuing a certificate of completion. Approved courses include: Introduction to the Child Care Profession, Fundamentals of Infant and Toddler Care, Fundamentals of Family Child Care, Skills and Strategies for the Child Care Teacher, 10-hour Administrator, 10-hour School-Age Assistant Child Care Worker. These courses meet the requirements under DCF 250 (Licensing Rules for Family Child Care Centers) and DCF 251 (Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers). Department-approved non-credit courses include, but are not limited to, the following content areas: Introduction to the Child Care Profession includes quality childcare environments, child development, positive guidance, recognizing child abuse & neglect, routines & schedules, transitions, nutrition, universal precautions, health & safety, SIDS, shaken baby syndrome prevention, respect for diversity, parent communication and stress management. Skills and Strategies for the Child Care Teacher includes growth & development, curriculum planning, observing & recording, developmentally appropriate activities for math, science, language, gross & fine motor, art, music and sensory, ADA, learning centers, parent communication, positive guidance and professional development. Fundamentals of Infant and Toddler care includes nurturing, health & safety, environment, routines, developmentally appropriate guidance, activity planning, parent communication, growth & development, staff/child interactions, shaken baby syndrome prevention, child abuse & neglect recognition and prevention and SIDS training. School Age coursework includes profile of a school age teacher, quality care, growth & development, school age classroom environment, field trip planning, multi-age activity planning, safety and behavior management. Fundamentals of Family Child Care Includes establishing a family daycare business, program & financial records, policies for health, safety, nutrition and development of children, state licensing requirements, professionalism, parent communication, and activity planning. Specific for-credit coursework in early childhood education may also meet the preservice training requirements if they include content areas: child development; special needs, disabilities, and inclusive practices; learning environments, strategies, and curriculum; health, safety, and nutrition; and guidance and nurturing. Preservice: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05 (3)(h), (i), and (j)2., DCF 251.05(4)(a)1. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Public school programs are not required to be licensed but are required to meet applicable child care licensing standards, including training qualifications. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05 (3)(b) and (c), DCF 250.05(4)(a)14. License-Exempt Family: Wis. Statutes, s. 48.651 (1d)(b), DCF 202.08(1)(b)3. and 4., DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.n. Ongoing: Licensed Group: DCF 251.05(3)(f)3. and DCF 251.05(4)(c)7.i. & s. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training requirements. Licensed Family: DCF 250.05(4)(c)1.i. & s. and DCF 250.05 (3)(b). License-Exempt Family: DCF 202.08(1)(b)3., DCF 202.08(1)(b)5.n., and Wis. Statutes, s. 48.651(1d)(b)2.

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for this topic. Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care?

Licensing administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved pre-

service training that includes specified health and safety topics before work commences. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251, including training. License-exempt family and in-home family administrative rules require providers to complete Lead Agency-approved training that addresses specified health and safety topics within three months of commencing work. Licensed family child care providers must complete all of the following: Three credits in early childhood education or a department-approved, non-credit course in early childhood education. A non-credit, department-approved course in operating a child care business or a course for credit in business or program administration or complete the Registry Family Child Care Credential or a child development associate credential in family child care issued by the Council for Professional Recognition. Staff working in licensed group centers or staff working in licensed-exempt CCDF-eligible group centers must have a certificate from The Registry documenting that the person has met the educational qualifications for the position. Child care teachers in group settings must complete or obtain one of the following: Two courses for credit in early childhood education or its equivalent from an institution of higher education. Two non-credit department-approved courses in early childhood education. One course for credit in early childhood education and one non-credit department-approved course in early childhood education. A Wisconsin Preschool Credential. A Wisconsin Infant-Toddler Credential. Forty-eight credits from an institution of higher education with at least 3 credits in early childhood education or its equivalent. A one-year child care diploma in child care or early childhood education from an institution of higher education. An associate degree in early childhood education or child care from an institution of higher education. Child Development Associate credential issued by the Council for Professional Recognition. Certificate from American Montessori Society, Association Montessori International, or Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. A certificate from the department of workforce development, bureau of apprenticeship standards, as a child development specialist. License-exempt family child care providers must complete at least two credits in early childhood education or a department-approved non-credit course in caring for children and a department-approved non-credit course in operating a child care business or a course for credit in business or program administration. Content for department-approved courses is described in 5.3.1a i. All caregivers in all settings must complete training in Infant/Child CPR and first-aid, SIDS training if caring for children under age 1, abusive head trauma prevention if caring for children under age 5, child abuse and neglect laws and identifying documenting and reporting child abuse and neglect. Additional training information can be found at the following Lead Agency websites:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/resources>

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
 - Pre-Service
 - Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
 - Yes
 - No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding this topic? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update their understanding of child development principles as described in the topic above.

When a new administrative rule or standard is proposed, the Lead Agency provides notice to regulated child care programs and other stakeholders and solicits feedback using a variety of communication strategies (e.g., public hearings, email, mailed memos, listserv messages, virtual or in-person meetings/training, on-site visits, system notices, social media, and newsletters). The Lead Agency utilizes the same communication methods to provide notice, technical assistance, and guidance regarding the implementation of new standards. The Registry posts training available to providers across the state that can be searched by specific criteria (e.g., date, topic area, region, and course title). The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training processes to ensure that the needs of all child care licensing and certifying staff are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of all staff.

5.3.13 Ongoing training annual requirements

Provide the number of hours of ongoing training required annually for eligible CCDF providers in the following settings (658E(c)(2)(G)(iii):

a. Licensed child care centers:

25 hours for those who work more than 20 hours per week; 15 hours for those who work 20 or fewer hours per week. Administrative rules require annual qualifying continuing education that includes any topic that addresses health or safety. Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), public school programs are exempt from licensure but are required to meet applicable licensing standards, including training and on-going training requirements.

b. License-exempt child care centers:

15 hours annually in qualifying topics that address health and safety.

c. Licensed family child care homes:

15 hours annually in qualifying topics that address health and safety.

d. License-exempt family child care homes:

15 hours annually in qualifying topics that address health and safety.

e. Regulated or registered In-home child care:

License-exempt in-home (certified) care requires five hours annually.

f. Non-regulated or registered in-home child care:

N/A

5.3.14 Optional standards compliance

In addition to the required standards, does the Lead Agency require providers to comply with the following optional standards? If checked, describe the standards, how often the training is required and include the citation. (Please check all that apply)

a. Nutrition:

Licensed and license-exempt programs that serve children meals and snacks that are prepared by the center, or obtained from caterers, schools, hospitals, etc., are required to follow CACFP minimum meal requirements. If parents supply meals and snacks, licensed child care programs must share the CACFP minimum meal requirements with parents. Licensed Group DCF 251.07(5), Licensed Family DCF 250.06(9), License-Exempt Family DCF 202.08(10). Wis. Admin. Codes DCF 202, 250, and 251 do not require a specific number of ongoing training related to specific health and safety topics. Continuing education hours must in one of the qualified health and safety subject areas, one of which is nutrition.

b. Access to physical activity:

Programs are required to provide a variety of activities for children, including active play and activities that use both large and small muscles. Centers must provide outdoor activities daily. Licensed Group DCF 251.07 (1), Licensed Family DCF 250.07(1), License-Exempt Family DCF 202.08(8). Wis. Admin. Codes DCF 202, 250, and 251 do not require a specific number of ongoing training related to specific health and safety topics. Continuing education hours must in one of the qualified health and safety subject areas and may include other topics that promote child development or protect children's health and safety.

c. Caring for children with special needs:

Licensed and license-exempt child care providers are required to have a program of activities and equipment and furnishings that are suitable for the size and developmental level of each child. Licensed and license-exempt programs are required to collect information about any special needs a child may have and to share that information with all persons who care for that child. Licensed Group DCF 251.05(3)(a), 251.05(4)(a)13., 251.07(1)(a), Licensed Family DCF 250.04(6)(a)1. & 4., 250.07(1)(b), License-Exempt Family DCF 202.08(8)(b), 202.08(12)(f)2. Wis. Admin. Codes DCF 202, 250, and 251 do not require a specific number of ongoing training related to specific health and safety topics. Continuing education hours must in one of the qualified health and safety subject areas and may include caring for children with special needs.

d. Any other areas determined necessary to promote child development or to protect children's health and safety (98.44(b)(1)(iii)). Describe:

Administrative rules for licensed and license-exempt have provisions that address child development, supervision of children and tracking a child's whereabouts, guiding children's behavior, the presence of pets, swimming pools, and night care between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. Continuing education hours must in one of the qualified health and safety subject areas, and may include other topics that promote child development or protect health and safety.

Citations: Licensed Group DCF 251.05(3)(a), 251.05(4)(a)13., 251.07(1)(a), Licensed Family DCF 250.04(6)(a)1. & 4., 250.07(1)(b), License-Exempt Family DCF 202.08(8)(b), 202.08(12)(f)2. Wis. Admin. Codes DCF 202, 250, and 251

5.4 Monitoring and Enforcement Policies and Practices for CCDF Providers

5.4.1 Enforcement of licensing and health and safety requirements.

Lead agencies must certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that all child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF services comply with all applicable state and local health and safety requirements, including those described in 98.41 (98.42(a)). This may include, but is not limited to, any systems used to ensure that providers complete health and safety trainings, any documentation required to be maintained by child care providers, or any other monitoring procedures to ensure compliance. Note: Inspection requirements are described starting in 5.4.2.

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a. To certify, describe the procedures to ensure that CCDF providers comply with the required Health and Safety **Standards** as described in Section 5.3.

Licensed and license-exempt family providers must comply with all standards before a license or certification may be granted. The Lead Agency has identified 71 health and safety rules in licensed family child care facilities, 73 rules in group child care facilities, 58 rules in license-exempt/certified family child care facilities, and 114 rules in license-exempt group child care settings, all of which are monitored annually unannounced by regulatory type. The Lead Agency's internal standard is to monitor for 100% of the attached health and safety rules, annually, unannounced. Licensing specialists perform ongoing monitoring of licensed facilities with regular, non-expiring licenses to determine compliance with all administrative rules. The monitoring plan is assigned by the licensing specialist based on the center's size, compliance history, and the status of the license (regular or probationary). The licensing specialist must make the minimum number of required visits per year according to the monitoring plan assignment and may make additional visits, as time permits, to establish compliance. Visits are unannounced unless a scheduled visit is necessary to provide technical assistance, for example, or to review records kept at a separate location. The licensing specialist utilizes a licensing checklist in the mobile app to ensure that all administrative rules are reviewed for each facility during a two-year period. In addition, the licensing specialist must ensure that a subset of child care administrative rules is reviewed for compliance annually. This subset includes administrative rules in ten health and safety areas identified in the federal (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/ccdbg> target="_blank") Child Care and Development Block Grant and also includes additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections of children in care. This subset of the rules is contained in the Annual Health and Safety Rule Tag in the mobile app. Under normal conditions, licensing specialists and certification agencies complete annual unannounced compliance reviews of child care administrative rules and the results of these reviews are reported to the centers as well as posted on the Lead Agency's website. The annual review is typically completed for all child care programs once each calendar year. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Lead Agency requested and has been granted a temporary waiver of the requirement for unannounced monitoring of all health and safety

standards through January 1, 2021 and has requested a second waiver for 2021. The waiver has allowed the Lead Agency to attend to the most immediate needs of child care programs as they recover from the COVID-19 crisis and to ensure a health and safety of Lead Agency workers and those they serve. The Lead Agency has determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or using remote inspections in lieu of or in addition to onsite inspections when necessary. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies consider multiple factors when determining whether onsite monitoring of health and safety standards can be conducted safely. These considerations include, but are not limited to: Wisconsin counties Public Health Dashboards' 7- or 14-day rolling average of Covid-19 Cases; The trend of COVID-19 cases in child care centers within a licensing region; and the number of Regional BECR staff that are available to conduct visits. The Lead Agency will resume routine unannounced monitoring when the immediate threat of the pandemic has subsided and when it is determined safe to do so. The Lead Agency continues to conduct inspections related to complaints/serious incidents, initial licensing/certification, unlicensed complaints, and enforcement verification.

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b. To certify, describe the procedures to ensure that CCDF providers comply with the required Health and Safety Training as described in Section 5.3.

The licensing rules require the licensee to maintain a file on each employee. The file shall be available for examination by the licensing representative at the center. A Staff Record Checklist is used by licensing staff to monitor compliance with staff files/records, including training requirements. Staff files must contain several items including: A certificate from The Registry documenting that the person has met the educational qualifications for the position. For persons not required to have a certificate from The Registry, including assistant teachers, and a teacher, center director, or administrator who has not worked for the center for more than 6 months, documentation of the person's educational qualifications. Each center shall develop and implement a written orientation program that all new employees, substitutes, and regular volunteers shall complete and document within their first week at the center. The orientation program shall cover all several required health and safety standards. Completion must be documented on an orientation form which is initialed and dated by the staff person and trainer. The department's form Staff Orientation Checklist ☐ Group Child Care Centers will meet this requirement but is not required. For licensed programs: Ten staff records or a 10% sampling of all staff records, whichever is greater, up to a maximum of 40 records over the two-year licensing period must be reviewed by the licensing specialist. For programs with less than ten staff members, all staff records which have not been reviewed in the previous two-year period or which have been added since the last visit must be reviewed. The sampling must include new staff hired since the last review. As mentioned previously, the sample personnel records are documented using the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/1675a.pdf>" target="_blank") Staff Record Checklist ☐ Group Child Care Centers (DCF-F-1675A) or the (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/forms/pdf/2051.pdf>" target="_blank") Staff Record Checklist ☐ Family Child Care Centers (DCF-F-2051). The Annual Health and Safety Rule Tag includes a requirement for an annual review for certain documentation in a sample of staff records. The licensing specialist determines the annual staff record review sample size. See the Annual Health and Safety Rule Tag for more information on the specific rules included in the annual review requirement for each type of licensed program. License-exempt school-based programs: Public Schools wishing to be eligible for Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy

program must complete the Information Required to Monitor School-Operated License Exempt Child Care Programs form DCF-F-5155-E. These programs are required to comply with DCF 251 the Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers, including training and qualification and are monitored for compliance with a subset of the licensing rules related to health and safety. After the Information Required to Monitor School-Operated License Exempt Child Care Programs is submitted to the regional licensing office, the program will be contacted by a licensing specialist to set up an announced visit to review the rules included on the Health and Safety Checklist ☒ Public School Operated Programs. For license-exempt family: Local counties, tribes, and subcontracted agencies are required to ensure all providers (certified operators and other caregivers) comply with training requirements specified in administrative code and Wis. Statutes, s. 48.651 prior to granting approval of a caregiver/provider. Verification of provider qualifications is entered into WISCCRS. WISCCRS is designed to require users enter department-approved training/qualifications for licensed-exempt family child care providers. The Lead-Agency monitors counties, tribes, and subcontracted agencies compliance with this standard and contract requirement through Certification Administrative Reviews. The review includes individual operator records reviews of three to give operator records (for most agencies) and up to 5% of currently certified operators for large agencies. The individual operator records review assesses compliance pertaining to provider qualifications/training.

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c. To certify, describe the procedures to ensure that CCDF providers comply with all other applicable state and local health, safety, and fire standards.

Licensed: The Lead Agency contracts with SFTA and 4C for Children to provide pre-licensing technical consultation to individuals and agencies interested in starting a licensed child care program. As part of the pre-licensing technical consultation, a visit is conducted at the proposed location of the child care program to do a walk-through of the building to identify items that will need to be in compliance before an application for a license is submitted. The technical consultant reviews licensing rules, which include the ten health and safety areas identified in the CCDBG federal legislation and additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections. The review of licensing rules also includes fire protection and evacuation procedures, including fire extinguishers, exits, and passageways, fire alarms and smoke detectors, and exit lighting. At the end of the technical consultation, the individual or agency receives the application for a license. A license is not granted until the licensing specialist has made at least one on-site visit to the center and has verified compliance with all applicable items on the Initial Licensing Checklist. Once the license is granted, monitoring activity standards establish the minimum number of unannounced onsite visits to licensed child care facilities that the licensing specialists are expected to make during specific time frames in order to monitor for compliance with licensing statute and rules. The frequency of visits depends on the size, type, and compliance history of the provider. **License-exempt school-based:** Once the initial visit is conducted by the licensing specialist to ensure the program complies with applicable standards under DCF 251, and the program is CCDF-eligible, annual monitoring of health, safety, and fire protections is conducted by Lead Agency licensing specialists. **License-exempt family:** Counties, tribes, and subcontracted agencies determine compliance with DCF 202 before granting initial certification. These agencies are responsible for conducting annual monitoring visits to ensure continued compliance with DCF 202 including health, safety, and fire standards.

5.4.2 Inspections for licensed CCDF providers.

Lead agencies must require licensing inspectors to perform inspections—with no fewer than one pre-licensure inspection for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards—of each child care provider and facility in the state/territory. Licensing inspectors are required to perform no fewer than one annual, unannounced inspection of each licensed CCDF provider for compliance with all child care licensing standards; it shall include an inspection for compliance with health and safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41) and fire standards; inspectors may inspect for compliance with all three standards—health, safety, and fire—at the same time (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(II); 98.16 (n); 98.42(b)(2)(i)).

Certify by describing, in the questions below, your state/territory’s monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that licensed child care providers comply with licensing standards, including compliance with health and safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41) and fire standards.

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a. Licensed CCDF center-based child care

- i. Describe your state/territory’s policies and practices for pre-licensure inspections of licensed child care center providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.

Licensed: The Lead Agency contracts with SFTA and 4C for Children to provide pre-licensing technical consultation to individuals and agencies interested in starting a licensed child care program. As part of the pre-licensing technical consultation, a visit is conducted at the proposed location of the child care program to do a walk-through of the building to identify items that will need to be in compliance before an application for a license is submitted. The technical consultant reviews licensing rules, which include the eleven health and safety areas identified in the CCDBG federal legislation and additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections. The review of licensing rules also includes fire protection and evacuation procedures, including fire extinguishers, exits and passageways, fire alarms and smoke detectors, and exit lighting. At the end of the technical consultation, the individual or agency receives the application for a license. A license is not granted until the licensing specialist has made at least one on-site visit to the center and has verified compliance with all applicable items on the Initial Licensing Checklist. In many cases, the licensing specialist completes at least two on-site visits during the application process to provide pre-licensing technical assistance and to verify compliance with those applicable rules that can be reviewed and documented as met prior to issuance of a probationary license. When a second licensing visit is necessary to confirm that all applicable rules are met, the applicant notifies the licensing specialist that s/he is ready for the second on-site visit. The licensing specialist conducts this second on-site licensing visit relying on the same checklist information gathered at the initial licensing visit. If more than 60 days has elapsed since the initial visit, all rules on the checklist must be re-verified.

- ii. Describe your state/territory’s policies and practices for annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF child care center providers.

Under normal conditions, licensing specialists complete annual unannounced compliance reviews of child care administrative rules and the results of these reviews are reported to the licensed centers as well as posted on the Lead Agency's website. During this annual review the licensing specialist must complete compliance reviews on a subset of identified child care administrative rules. This subset of rules covers the eleven CCDF health and safety standards identified in the CCDBG legislation and additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections (e.g., staff-to-child ratio and supervision).

The annual review is typically completed for all licensees once each calendar year. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, the Lead Agency requested and has been granted a temporary waiver of the requirement for unannounced monitoring of all health and safety standards through January 1, 2021 and has requested a second waiver for 2021. The waiver has allowed the Lead Agency to attend to the most immediate needs of child care programs as they recover from the COVID-19 crisis and to ensure a health and safety of Lead Agency workers and those they serve. The Lead Agency has determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or using remote inspections in lieu of or in addition to on-site inspections when necessary. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies consider multiple factors when determining whether onsite monitoring of health and safety standards can be conducted safely. These considerations include, but are not limited to: Wisconsin counties Public Health Dashboards' 7- or 14-day rolling average of COVID-19 cases; the trend of COVID-19 cases in child care centers within a licensing region; and the number of Regional BECR staff that are available to conduct visits. The Lead Agency will resume routine unannounced monitoring when the immediate threat of the pandemic has subsided and when it is determined safe to do so. The Lead agency continues to conduct inspections related to complaints/serious incidents, initial licensing/certification, unlicensed complaints, and enforcement verification.

iii. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:

A. Once a year

B. More than once a year. Describe:

Licensed group centers typically receive two or more unannounced monitoring visits per year, depending on size and type of facility and compliance history. Due to the COVID-19 public health emergency a temporary waiver of the requirement for unannounced monitoring of all health and safety standards was granted for 2020 and the Lead Agency has submitted another waiver request for 2021. The Lead Agency has determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or using remote inspections, in lieu of or in addition to onsite inspections when necessary. The Lead Agency considers multiple factors when determining whether onsite monitoring of health and safety standards can be conducted safely. These considerations include, but are not limited to: Wisconsin counties Public Health Dashboards' 7- or 14-day rolling average of COVID-19 cases; the trend of COVID-19 cases in child care centers within a licensing region; and the number of Regional BECR staff that are available to conduct visits. The Lead Agency will resume routine unannounced monitoring when the immediate threat of the pandemic has subsided and when it is determined safe to do so. The Lead agency continues to conduct inspections related to complaints/serious incidents, initial licensing/certification, unlicensed complaints, and enforcement verification.

iv. If applicable, describe the differential monitoring process and how these inspections ensure that child care center providers continue to comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.

Monitoring activity standards establish the minimum number of unannounced onsite visits to licensed child care facilities that the licensing specialists are expected to make during specific time frames in order to monitor for compliance with licensing statute and rules. The frequency of visits depends on the size, type, and compliance history of the provider. Visits to a center often begin with an initial observational walk-through of the center by the licensing specialist. The walk-through provides the licensing specialist with an overall impression of the center and may point to specific areas of the administrative rule that require more thorough monitoring. On each monitoring visit, the licensing specialist observes and documents each program's compliance with

licensing rules using the appropriate program-specific licensing checklist. Each checklist includes all administrative rules relevant to that type of regulated facility. Over a two-year period, all administrative rules must be reviewed for each licensee. Annually, child care programs are monitored for compliance with health and safety standards including the 11 CCDF standards. Under normal circumstances, the licensing specialist ensures that a subset of administrative rules is reviewed for compliance annually. This subset is comprised of administrative rules in 11 health and safety areas identified in the Child Care Development Block Grant federal legislation and additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections. This subset of the rules is identified as the Annual Health and Safety Rule Tag in the iPad-based Licensor Checklist Mobile Application (mobile app). The rules addressing the ten health and safety areas are reviewed by licensing staff annually. The review of licensing rules also includes fire protection and evacuation procedures, including fire extinguishers, exits and passageways, fire alarms and smoke detectors, and exit lighting. The licensing specialist identifies the rules that are met or unmet (or not applicable for the particular center under review) in the mobile app. and this information is automatically synchronized into the database that stores child care compliance information, the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS). Unmet violations are documented and addressed through noncompliance statements requiring violation correction, and, if necessary, enforcement actions. The results of the compliance reviews on child care administrative rules are reported to the licensed centers, as well as posted on the Lead Agency's public website. Regional managers generate reports from the child care database that identify rules that must be monitored, by facility and by licensing specialist, and these reports are reviewed regularly with licensing staff to ensure all rules are reviewed as required. The Lead Agency was granted a temporary waiver for 2020 and has submitted another temporary waiver request for 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Lead Agency has determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or use remote inspections, in lieu of or in addition to onsite inspections when necessary. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies consider multiple factors when determining whether onsite monitoring of health and safety standards can be conducted safely. These considerations include, but are not limited to: Wisconsin counties Public Health Dashboards' 7- or 14-day rolling average of COVID-19 cases; the trend of COVID-19 cases in child care centers within a licensing region; and the number of Regional BECR staff that are available to conduct visits. The Lead Agency will resume routine unannounced monitoring when the immediate threat of the pandemic has subsided and when it is determined safe to do so. The Lead Agency continues to conduct inspections related to complaints/serious incidents, initial licensing/certification, unlicensed complaints, and enforcement verification.

- v. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF center providers.
Wis. Statute, s.48.73 gives the Lead Agency authority to conduct inspections of child care facilities and gives licensing staff unrestricted access to the premises to conduct any inspections.

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b. Licensed CCDF family child care home

- i. Describe your state/territory's policies and practices for pre-licensure inspections of licensed family child care providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire

standards.

The Lead Agency contracts with SFTA and 4C for Children to provide pre-licensing technical consultation to individuals and agencies interested in starting a child care program. As part of the pre-licensing technical consultation, a visit is conducted at the proposed location of the child care program to do a walk-through of the building to identify items that will need to be in compliance before an application for a license is submitted. The technical consultant reviews licensing rules, which include the ten health and safety areas identified in the CCDBG federal legislation and additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections. The review of licensing rules also includes fire protection and evacuation procedures, including fire extinguishers, exits and passageways, fire alarms and smoke detectors, and exit lighting. At the end of the technical consultation, the individual or agency receives the application for a license. Pursuant to Wis. Admin. Code, a license must be issued within 60 working days of receipt and approval of all application materials, including documentation that all applicable rules are met, the satisfactory completion of any needed investigation, compliance with all initial licensing requirements, and the determination by licensing staff that the applicant is fit and qualified to operate a family child care center. A license is not issued until the background checks have been completed and a licensing specialist has made at least one on-site visit to the center and has verified compliance with all applicable items on the Initial Licensing Checklist. In many cases, the licensing specialist completes at least two onsite visits during the application process to provide pre-licensing technical assistance and to verify compliance with those applicable rules that can be reviewed and documented as met prior to issuance of a probationary license. When a second licensing visit is necessary to confirm that all applicable rules are met, the applicant notifies the licensing specialist that s/he is ready for the second on-site visit. The licensing specialist conducts this second onsite licensing visit relying on the same checklist information gathered at the initial licensing visit. If more than 60 days has elapsed since the initial visit, all rules on the checklist must be re-verified.

- ii. Describe your state/territory's policies and practices for annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF family child care providers.
Annually, child care programs are monitored for compliance with health and safety standards including the 11 CCDF standards. Under normal circumstances, licensing specialists complete annual unannounced compliance reviews on a subset of identified child care administrative rules related to health and safety and report the results of these reviews to the family child care provider as well as posting the review results on the Lead Agency's website. This subset of rules covers the 11 health and safety areas identified in the CCDBG legislation and additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections (e.g., staff to child ratio and supervision). The annual review is typically completed for all licensees once each calendar year. The Lead Agency was granted a temporary waiver for 2020 and 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Lead Agency has determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or use remote inspections, in lieu of or in addition to onsite inspections when necessary. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies consider multiple factors when determining whether onsite monitoring of health and safety standards can be conducted safely. These considerations include but are not limited to: Wisconsin counties Public Health Dashboards' 7- or 14-day rolling average of COVID-19 Cases; the trend of COVID-19 cases in child care centers within a licensing region; and the number of Regional BECR staff that are available to conduct visits. The Lead Agency will resume routine unannounced monitoring when the immediate threat of the pandemic has

subsidized and when it is determined safe to do so. The Lead Agency continues to conduct inspections related to complaints/serious incidents, initial licensing/certification, unlicensed complaints, and enforcement verification.

iii. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:

A. Once a year

B. More than once a year. Describe:

Under normal circumstances licensed family child care centers receive a minimum of one unannounced onsite monitoring visit per year but may receive more than the minimum depending on compliance history. The lead agency was granted a temporary waiver for 2020 and 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lead Agency has determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or use remote inspections in lieu of or in addition to onsite inspections when necessary.

iv. If applicable, describe the differential monitoring process and how these inspections ensure that family child care providers continue to comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.

Monitoring activity standards establish the minimum number of unannounced onsite visits to licensed family child care homes that the licensing specialists are expected to make during specific time frames in order to monitor for compliance with licensing statute and rules. The frequency of visits depends on the size, type, and compliance history of the provider. Visits to a family child care home often begin with an initial observational walk-through of the home by the licensing specialist. The walk-through provides the licensing specialist with an overall impression of the program and may point to specific areas of the administrative rule that require more thorough monitoring. On each monitoring visit, the licensing specialist observes and documents each program's compliance with licensing rules using the family child care licensing checklist. Each checklist includes all administrative rules relevant to licensed family child care. Over a two-year period, all administrative rules must be reviewed for each licensee. Annually, child care programs are monitored for compliance with health and safety standards including the 11 CCDF standards. Typically, the licensing specialist ensures that a subset of administrative rules is reviewed for compliance annually. This subset is comprised of administrative rules in 11 health and safety areas identified in the Child Care Development Block Grant federal legislation and additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections. The review of licensing rules also includes fire protection and evacuation procedures, including fire extinguishers, exits and passageways, fire alarms and smoke detectors, and exit lighting. This subset of the rules is identified as the Annual Health and Safety Rule Tag in the iPad-based Licensor Checklist Mobile Application (mobile app). The rules addressing the ten health and safety areas are reviewed by licensing staff annually, under normal circumstances. The mobile app is the tool used by the licensing specialist to record the results of each monitoring visit. The licensing specialist identifies the rules that are met or unmet (or not applicable for the particular center under review) in the mobile app and this information is automatically synchronized into the database that stores child care compliance information, the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS). Unmet violations are documented and addressed through noncompliance statements requiring violation correction, and, if necessary, enforcement actions. The results of the compliance reviews on child care administrative rules are reported to the licensed centers, as well as posted on the Lead

Agency's public website. BECR regional managers generate reports from the child care database that identify rules that must be monitored, by facility and by licensing specialist, and these reports are reviewed regularly with licensing staff to ensure all rules are reviewed as required. The Lead Agency was granted a temporary waiver for 2020 and 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Lead Agency has determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or use remote inspections, in lieu of or in addition to onsite inspections when necessary. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies consider multiple factors when determining whether onsite monitoring of health and safety standards can be conducted safely. These considerations include, but are not limited to: Wisconsin counties Public Health Dashboards' 7- or 14-day rolling average of COVID-19 Cases; the trend of COVID-19 cases in child care centers within a licensing region; and the number of Regional BECR staff that are available to conduct visits. The Lead Agency will resume routine unannounced monitoring when the immediate threat of the pandemic has subsided and when it is determined safe to do so. The Lead Agency continues to conduct inspections related to complaints/serious incidents, initial licensing/certification, unlicensed complaints, and enforcement verification.

- v. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF family child care providers.
Wis. Statute, s. 48.73 gives the Lead Agency authority to conduct inspections of child care facilities and gives licensing staff unrestricted access to the premises to conduct any inspections.

c. Licensed in-home CCDF child care

- i. Does your state/territory license in-home child care (care in the child's own home)?

No

Yes. If yes, answer A – E below:

- A. Describe your state/territory's policies and practices for pre-licensure inspections of licensed in-home care (care in the child's own) providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.
N/A
- B. Describe your state/territory's policies and practices for annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF child care in-home care (care in the child's own home) providers.
N/A
- C. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:
 1. Once a year
 2. More than once a year. Describe:
N/A
- D. If applicable, describe the differential monitoring process and how these inspections ensure that in-home care (care in the child's own providers continue to comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.
- E. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF in-home care (care in the child's own home) providers.
N/A

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d. List the entity(ies) in your state/territory that is responsible for conducting pre-licensure inspections and unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF providers.

The Lead Agency Licensing Specialists are responsible for conducting unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF providers. Pre-licensing inspections are conducted by SFTA and 4C for Children staff. During pre-license status Technical Assistance services are also provided by both agencies.

5.4.3 Inspections for license-exempt center-based and family child care providers.

The Lead Agency must have policies and practices that require licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) to perform an annual monitoring visit of each license-exempt CCDF provider for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(IV); 98.42(b)(2)(ii)). Inspections for relative providers will be addressed in question 5.6.4. At a minimum, the health and safety requirements to be inspected must address the standards listed in subsection 5.3 (98.41(a)).

a. To certify, describe the policies and practices for the annual monitoring of:

License-exempt center-based CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

Monitoring for the purpose of determining the license-exempt program's compliance with health and safety administrative rules is achieved through unannounced or announced onsite visits. Licensing specialists typically conduct a minimum of one monitoring visit per year to each license-exempt child care program receiving or eligible to receive Wisconsin Shares reimbursement. These child care programs are monitored annually for compliance with health and safety standards including the eleven CCDF standards. Under normal circumstances all license-exempt programs participating in YoungStar receive the annual inspection required in the CCDBG legislation, regardless of whether children receiving Wisconsin Shares are currently enrolled in the program. During the annual monitoring visit to a license-exempt center-based program, a licensing specialist reviews the program's compliance with a subset of group child care administrative rules, identified as the Annual Health and Safety Rule Tag and included in the iPad mobile application. This subset of rules covers administrative rules in 11 health and safety areas identified in the CCDBG legislation as well as additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections. The review of licensing rules also includes fire protection and evacuation procedures, including fire extinguishers, exits and passageways, fire alarms and smoke detectors, and exit lighting. Monitoring results for license-exempt center-based programs must be documented in writing and published on the Child Care Finder website. The results of each annual visit are recorded and shared with the program on the Compliance Statement-Public School Operated Child Care Program form (used to document that no violations were observed at the visit) or Noncompliance Statement and Correction Plan - Public School Operated Child Care Program form (used to document all violations of administrative rules identified at the license-exempt program at the time of the onsite monitoring visit). The license-exempt center-based program may choose to submit a correction plan to address how the program will correct the cited violations. Licensing specialists verify correction of the cited violations at the next routine annual visit. Monitoring results are displayed on the Child Care Finder website one day after the information is finalized in WISCCRS. Violations and compliance information remain on the public website for three years. The Lead Agency was granted a temporary waiver for 2020 and for 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Lead Agency has

determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or use remote inspections, in lieu of or in addition to onsite inspections when necessary. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies consider multiple factors when determining whether onsite monitoring of health and safety standards can be conducted safely. These considerations include but are not limited to: Wisconsin counties Public Health Dashboards' 7- or 14-day rolling average of COVID-19 cases; the trend of COVID-19 cases in child care centers within a licensing region; and the number of Regional staff that are available to conduct visits. The Lead Agency will resume routine unannounced monitoring when the immediate threat of the pandemic has subsided and when it is determined safe to do so. The Lead Agency continues to conduct inspections related to complaints/serious incidents, initial licensing/certification, unlicensed complaints, and enforcement verification.

i. Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Pursuant to Wis. Statutes, s. 120.13(14), a child care program established and provided by a school board is not licensed but must comply with the applicable standards governing the operation of licensed child care centers in Wisconsin, as provided under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 251. Wis. Admin. Codes DCF 251.13(1) and (2) require license-exempt programs to comply with applicable standards under DCF 251 and that the Lead Agency annually inspects license-exempt programs to ensure compliance with chapter DCF 251.

b. License-exempt family child care CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used.

Annually, child care programs are monitored for compliance with health and safety standards including the eleven CCDF standards. Typically, the Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies ensure that a subset of the DCF 202 administrative rules is reviewed for compliance annually, unannounced. This subset is comprised of administrative rules in eleven health and safety areas identified in the Child Care Development Block Grant federal legislation and additional rules identified in Wisconsin as critical to health and safety protections. The rules addressing the eleven health and safety areas are reviewed by licensing staff in Milwaukee County and by contracted local agencies in the balance of the state, annually, under normal circumstances. The mobile app is the tool used by the Lead Agency staff to record the results of each monitoring visit. Subcontracted local agency staff document monitoring results on a Standards and Checklist and enter their monitoring results in WISCCRS. Rules are entered as met or unmet (or not applicable for the center under review) in the mobile app and this information is automatically synchronized into the database that stores child care compliance information, the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS). Local subcontracted workers must enter the monitoring results directly into WISCCRS. Unmet violations are documented and addressed through noncompliance statements requiring violation correction, and, if necessary, enforcement actions. The results of the compliance reviews on child care administrative rules are reported to the license-exempt child care provider, as well as posted on the Lead Agency's public website. License-exempt family child care operators are, typically, monitored at least once annually, unannounced, for compliance with health and safety standards. The Lead Agency was granted a temporary waiver for 2020 and has submitted another temporary waiver request for 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Lead Agency has determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or use remote inspections in lieu of or in addition to onsite inspections when necessary. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies consider multiple factors when determining whether on-site monitoring of health and safety standards can be conducted safely. These considerations include, but are not limited to: Wisconsin counties Public Health Dashboards' 7- or 14-day rolling average of COVID-19

cases; the trend of COVID-19 cases in child care centers within a licensing region; and the number of Regional BECR staff or certification workers that are available to conduct visits. The Lead Agency will resume routine unannounced monitoring when the immediate threat of the pandemic has subsided and when it is determined safe to do so. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies continues to conduct inspections related to complaints/serious incidents, initial licensing/certification, unlicensed complaints, and enforcement verification.

- i. Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Wis. Admin. Code DCF 202.04(3)(b)9.b., 10., and 11.

5.4.4 Inspections for license-exempt in-home care (care in the child's own home).

Lead Agencies have the option to develop alternate monitoring requirements for care provided in the child's home that are appropriate to the setting. A child's home may not meet the same standards as other child care facilities and this provision gives Lead Agencies flexibility in conducting more streamlined and targeted on-site inspections. For example, Lead Agencies may choose to monitor in-home providers on basic health and safety requirements such as training and background checks. Lead Agencies could choose to focus on health and safety risks that pose imminent danger to children in care. This flexibility cannot be used to bypass the monitoring requirement altogether. States should develop procedures for notifying parents of monitoring protocols and consider whether it would be appropriate to obtain parental permission prior to entering the home for inspection (98.42(b)(2)(iv)(B)).

- a. To certify, describe the policies and practices for the annual monitoring of license-exempt in-home care, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring procedures are used.

In-home providers receive annual monitoring of health and safety standards that include the 11 CCDF standards, but the visit may be announced. Typically, the Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies ensure that a subset of the DCF 202 administrative rules is reviewed for compliance annually. Rules that are entered as met or unmet (or not applicable for the center under review) in the mobile app and this information is automatically synchronized into the database that stores child care compliance information, the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS). Local subcontracted workers must enter the monitoring results directly into WISCCRS. Unmet violations are documented and addressed through noncompliance statements requiring violation correction, and, if necessary, enforcement actions. The results of the compliance reviews on child care administrative rules are reported to the license-exempt in-home child care provider. The Lead Agency utilizes differential monitoring requirements for care provided in a child's home. Under normal circumstances, in-home care is monitored annually but the visit may be announced. Visits are typically conducted with the parent present. In-home operators are exempt from specific license-exempt rules under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 202 because the care is provided in the child's home. DCF 202.08 (3) states: When a license-exempt family child care operator cares for children in the children's own home, the operator shall comply with requirements in sub. (2) (c), (e), (L) and (n), but the operator is not required to comply with requirements in sub. (2) (a), (am), (b), (d), (f), (g), (i), (j), (k), (m), (o), and (p). The Lead Agency was granted a temporary waiver for 2020 and has submitted another temporary waiver request for 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the Lead Agency has determined that it is in the best interests of the children and families served in regulated child care settings to measure regulatory compliance virtually or use remote inspections in lieu of or in addition to on-site inspections when necessary. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies consider multiple factors when determining whether onsite monitoring of health and safety standards can be conducted safely. These considerations include, but are not limited to: Wisconsin counties Public Health Dashboards' 7- or 14-day rolling average of

COVID-19 cases; the trend of COVID-19 cases in child care centers within a licensing region; and the number of Regional BECR staff or certification workers that are available to conduct visits. The Lead Agency will resume routine annual monitoring of in-home family child care providers when the immediate threat of the pandemic has subsided and when it is determined safe to do so. The Lead Agency and subcontracted agencies continue to conduct inspections related to complaints/serious incidents, initial licensing/certification, unlicensed complaints, and enforcement verification.

b. Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Wis. Admin. Code DCF 202.04(3)(b)9., 10. and 11.

c. List the entity(ies) in your state/territory that are responsible for conducting inspections of license-exempt CCDF providers:

The Lead Agency contracts with local counties and tribes to administer child care certification under Wis. Statutes, s. 48.651. Counties and tribes may choose to subcontract with a CCR&R or similar agency to administer the program locally. All subcontracts must be approved by the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency monitors the performance of certification agencies using contract performance standards and it conducts a 3-year Certification Review. A list of certification agencies is found here:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cccertification/certifiers.pdf>)

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/ccregulation/cccertification/certifiers.pdf>

5.4.5 Licensing Inspectors (or qualified inspectors designated by the Lead Agency).

Lead Agencies will have policies and practices that ensure that individuals who are hired as licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) are qualified to inspect child care providers and facilities and have received health and safety training appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served. Training shall include, but is not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41(a)(1) and all aspects of the state's licensure requirements (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(I); 98.42(b)(1-2)).

a. To certify, describe how the Lead Agency ensures that licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) are qualified to inspect child care facilities and providers

The State of Wisconsin classification specification for licensing inspectors states that the qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based on an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed and by an identification of the education, training, work or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired. Licensing inspectors have: Experience investigating complaints and/or concerns; Experience interpreting and applying state statutes and/or administrative codes; Experience working in early education, child welfare, family services, or other human services field; Experience working with state computer and information systems; Experience writing complex and detailed reports; Experience preparing for and testifying in court or administrative hearings; Experience conducting home visits or business site visits in a regulatory capacity; Experience working independently with the ability to establish priorities. In addition, all licensing inspectors attend New Licensing Staff Training, which addresses the health and safety requirements for family child care homes and group child care centers, including license-exempt group centers. Computer-based training and training with supervisors and other experienced licensing inspectors compliments the new licensing staff training to build

understanding of the licensing rules.

b. To certify, describe how inspectors and monitors have received training on health and safety requirements that are appropriate to the age of the children in care and the type of provider setting (98.42(b)(1-2)).

The State of Wisconsin classification specification for licensing inspectors states that the qualifications required for these positions will be determined at the time of recruitment. Such determinations will be made based on an analysis of the goals and worker activities performed and by an identification of the education, training, work or other life experience which would provide reasonable assurance that the knowledge and skills required upon appointment have been acquired. Licensing inspectors have: Experience investigating complaints and/or concerns; Experience interpreting and applying state statutes and/or administrative codes; Experience working in early education, child welfare, family services, or other human services field; Experience working with state computer and information systems; Experience writing complex and detailed reports; Experience preparing for and testifying in court or administrative hearings; Experience conducting home visits or business site visits in a regulatory capacity; Experience working independently with the ability to establish priorities. In addition, all licensing inspectors attend New Licensing Staff Training, which addresses the health and safety requirements for family child care homes and group child care centers, including license-exempt group centers. Computer-based training and training with supervisors and other experienced licensing inspectors compliments the new licensing staff training to build understanding of the licensing rules. Additionally, the Lead Agency provides On the Job training to all new licensing staff which includes specific training on the application of safety requirements that are appropriate to the age of the children as well as the different provider types that they will be responsible to monitor. Lastly, the Lead Agency will be developing specific CBT trainings covering these areas to ensure all new and experience staff have access to these trainings on an ongoing basis.

c. Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure.

Wisconsin Department of Employment Relations, Form DER-PERS-10, Position Description: Licensing/Certification Specialist.

5.4.6 Ratio of Licensing Inspectors

The states and territories shall have policies and practices that require the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers and facilities in the state/territory to be maintained at a level sufficient to enable the state/territory to conduct effective inspections of child care providers and facilities on a timely basis in accordance with federal, state, and local laws (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(III); 98.42(b)(3)).

a. To certify, describe the state/territory policies and practices regarding the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers (i.e. number of inspectors per number of child care providers) and facilities in the state/territory and include how the ratio is sufficient to conduct effective inspections on a timely basis.

The Lead Agency maintains a policy for monitoring activity standards that describes the expectations for monitoring visits, complaint investigations, and other duties of licensing specialist staff. The Lead Agency determines the number of licensing staff necessary to meet the expectations contained in the licensing activity standards and monitors to ensure that all programs receive the required number of monitoring visits, that all complaints are

investigated in a timely manner, and that other licensing specialist responsibilities are met.

b. Provide the policy citation and state/territory ratio of licensing inspectors.

Wis. Statute, s. 48.66 states the ratio is one licensing specialist to 86.2 programs.

5.5 Comprehensive Background Checks

The CCDBG Act requires states and territories to have in effect requirements, policies and procedures to conduct comprehensive background checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all child care programs that are 1) licensed, regulated, or registered under state/territory law; or, 2) all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers) (98.43(a)(1)(i)). Background check requirements apply to any staff member who is employed by a child care provider for compensation, including contract employees and self-employed individuals; whose activities involve the care or supervision of children; or who has unsupervised access to children (98.43(2)). For family child care homes, this requirement includes the caregiver and any other adults residing in the family child care home who are age 18 or older (98.43(2)(ii)(C)). This requirement does not apply to individuals who are related to all children for whom child care services are provided (98.43(2)(B)(ii)). Exemptions for relative providers will be addressed in 5.6.5.

A comprehensive background check must include eight (8) separate and specific components (98.43(2)(b)), which encompass three (3) in-state checks, two (2) national checks, and three (3) interstate checks (if the individual resided in another state in the preceding 5 years).

5.5.1 Background check requirements

Background Check Requirements. In the table below, certify by checking that the state has policies, and is conducting checks for the required background check components, ensuring that these requirements are in place for all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers and for all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43(a)(1)(i), 98.43(a)(2) and 98.16(o).

a. Components of In-State Background Checks

i. Criminal registry or repository using fingerprints in the current state of residency

Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am)1. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am)1. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

ii. Sex offender registry or repository check in the current state of residency

Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am)6. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am)6. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

iii. Child abuse and neglect registry and database check in the current state of residency

Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am)4. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services

Citation:

Wis. Stat § 48.686(2)(am)7. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

b. Components of National Background Check

i. FBI Fingerprint Check

Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers

Citation:

Wis. Stat § 48.686(2)(am)7. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services

Citation:

Wis. Stat § 48.686(2)(am)7. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

ii. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) name-based search

Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am)8. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am)8. and Wis. Admin. Code DCF 13

c. Components of Interstate Background Checks

i. Criminal registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years, with the use of fingerprints being optional.

Note: It is optional to use a fingerprint to conduct this check. Searching a general public facing judicial website does not satisfy this requirement. This check must be completed in addition to the national FBI history check to mitigate any gaps that may exist between the two sources (unless the responding state participates in the National Fingerprint File program).

Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am) (9)a. and Wis. Admin. Code 13

All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am) (9)a. and Wis. Admin. Code 13

ii. Sex offender registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years.

Note: It is optional to use a fingerprint to conduct this check. This check must be completed in addition to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) to mitigate any gaps that may exist between the two sources.

Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(am)(9)b. and Wis. Admin. Code 13

All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services

Citation:

Wis. Stat. § 48.686 (2)(am)(9)b. and Wis. Admin. Code 13

iii. Child abuse and neglect registry and database in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years

Note: This is a name-based search

Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers

Citation:

Wis. Stat. §48.686(2) (am)(9)c. and Wis. Admin. Code 13

All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services

Citation:

Wis. Stat. §48.686(2) (am)(9)c. and Wis. Admin. Code 13

5.5.2 Procedures for a Provider to Request a Background Check.

Child care providers are required to submit requests for background checks for each of their staff members to the appropriate state or territorial agency, which is to be defined clearly on the state or territory Web site. Family child care home providers must also submit background check requests for all household members over the age of 18. The requests must be submitted prior to when the individual becomes a staff member and must be completed at least once every five years per § 98.43(d)(1) and (2). The state or territory must ensure that its policies and procedures under this section, including the process by which a child care provider or other state or territory may submit a background check request, are published on the web site of the state or territory as described in § 98.43(g) and the web site of local lead agencies.

a. Describe the state/territory procedure(s) for a provider to request the required background checks. If the process is different based on provider type, please include that in this description. If the process is different based on each background check component, please include that in this description.

Child care providers can submit requests for background checks in one of three methods: 1. Providers can request background checks online through the state’s Child Care Provider Portal at (<https://mywchildcareproviders.wisconsin.gov/>)

<https://mywchildcareproviders.wisconsin.gov>. 2. Individual child care workers may request their own background checks through the state's iChildCare portal at (<https://ichildcare.wisconsin.gov/>) <https://ichildcare.wisconsin.gov>. 3. If providers do not have access to either web site, they can submit a Background Check Request form (DCF-F-5296) to the Lead Agency by mail, email or fax. Regardless of the submission method chosen, the request process is used to initiate all background check components and is the same for all regulated and license-exempt provider types.

b. The state/territory must ensure that fees charged for completing the background checks do not exceed the actual cost of processing and administration, regardless of whether they are conducted by the state/territory or a third-party vendor or contractor. What are the fees and how do you ensure that these fees do not exceed the actual cost of processing and administering the background checks? Lead Agencies can report that no fees are charged if applicable (98.43(f)).

Per Wis. Stat. § 48.686(2)(ag)3. the Lead Agency cannot collect fees that exceed the actual cost of conducting a child care background check. Providers are charged \$39.50 for a fingerprint-based background check. This fee includes the cost of the FBI and Wisconsin DOJ records searches as well as a fingerprint collection fee. The Lead Agency does not charge providers for additional fees from other states incurred while conducting interstate records searches.

c. Describe the state/territory policy(ies) related to prospective staff members working on a provisional basis. Pending completion of all background check components in 98.43(b), the prospective staff member must be supervised at all times by an individual who received a qualifying result on a background check described in 98.43(b) within the past 5 years (98.43(c)(4)) and the prospective staff member must have completed and received satisfactory results on either the FBI fingerprint check or a fingerprint check of the state/territory criminal registry or repository in the state where the prospective staff member resides. Describe and include a citation for the Lead Agency's policy:

As described in Wis. Stat. § 48.686(4m)(c) prospective child care staff members may begin caring for children if they receive preliminary eligibility. Preliminary eligibility means the individual does not have a barred offense on initial fingerprint-based FBI and Wisconsin DOJ criminal history searches. While their final eligibility is pending, the prospective staff member must be supervised by an individual who has received final background check eligibility within the last five years. Once the other background check elements required by 98.43(b) are complete and staff members receive a final eligibility decision, they may care for children without additional supervision.

d. Describe the procedure for providers to request background checks for staff members that resided in another state within the previous 5 years.

Child care providers submit background checks requests through the state's Child Care Provider Portal, the iChildCare portal for individual requests, or submission of a Background Check Request form (DCF-F-5296) by mail, email or fax. Individuals are asked to disclose whether they have lived outside Wisconsin in the last five years and if so, in which states. The Lead Agency uses this information to request interstate records searches on behalf of the provider. The Lead Agency also contacts the provider and individual to obtain additional release forms that are required by other states.

e. Describe the procedure to ensure each staff member completes all components of the background check process at least once during each 5-year period. If your state enrolls child care staff members in the FBI Rap Back Program or a state-based rap back program, please include that in this description. Note: An FBI Rap Back program only covers the FBI Fingerprint

component of the background check. If child care staff members are enrolled in a state-based rap back, please indicate which background check components are covered by this service.

When child care providers submit background check requests through one of the portals or by submitting a paper form, the individual's information is updated in the Lead Agency's database, the Wisconsin Child Care Regulatory System (WISCCRS). WISCCRS tracks the date of each individual's last FBI fingerprint background check, as well as the dates the individual is employed at the center. The system uses date logic to determine which individuals are still actively employed in child care and who is due for the 5-year FBI fingerprint background check. The system updates the web portals and issues an instruction letter to inform the provider and individual that they are due to complete new fingerprints. The Lead Agency uses system reporting to track fingerprint compliance.

f. Describe the procedure to ensure providers who are separated from employment for more than 180 consecutive days receive a full background check.

Child care providers maintain their staff members' beginning and ending employment dates in the Child Care Provider Portal. Entries in the Portal update the Lead Agency's WISCCRS database. WISCCRS uses date logic to track the number of days an individual has been inactive in child care. If the individual has been gone for more than 180 days, the system requires the individual to complete a new fingerprint background check and receive a new preliminary eligibility decision before they can begin working in child care again.

g. Provide the website link that contains instructions on how child care providers should initiate background check requests for a prospective employee (98.43(g)).

Providers can obtain instructions on the Child Care Background Checks web page at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck>

5.5.3 Procedures for a Lead Agency to Respond to and Complete a Background Check.

Once a request has been initiated, the state shall carry out the request of a child care provider for a criminal background check as expeditiously as possible, but not to exceed 45 days after the date on which such request was submitted. The Lead Agency shall make the determination whether the prospective staff member is eligible for employment in a child care program (98.43(e)(1)). Lead Agencies must ensure the privacy of background checks by providing the results of the criminal background check to the requestor or identified recipient in a statement that indicates whether a child care staff member (including a prospective child care staff member or a family child care household member over the age of 18) is eligible or ineligible for employment, without revealing any documentation of criminal history or disqualifying crimes or other related information regarding the individual. In the following questions, describe the Lead Agency's procedures for conducting background checks. These responses should include:

- The name of the agency that conducts the investigation; include multiple names if multiple agencies are involved in different background check components
- How the Lead Agency is informed of the results of each background check component
- Who makes the determinations regarding the staff member's eligibility? Note: Disqualification decisions should align to the response provided in 5.5.7.
- How the Lead Agency ensures that a background check request is carried out as quickly as possible and not more than 45 days after a request is submitted.

a. Describe the procedures for conducting In-State Background Check requests and making a

determination of eligibility.

The Lead Agency receives all in-state background check records through data integrations with its child care regulatory database, WISCCRS. The Wisconsin Department of Justice submits the following background check records through the WISCCRS integration: 1. fingerprint-based FBI criminal history; 2. fingerprint-based state criminal history; and 3. name-based NCIC National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) records. The Lead Agency receives additional background check information through WISCCRS integration: 1. child protective services database maintained by the Lead Agency; 2. sex offender registry records; 3. in-state online court records from the Consolidated Court Automation Program (CCAP) system; 4. professional license history from the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS); and 5. child care regulatory history maintained by the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency's Child Care Background Unit (CBU) reviews the background check records received through data integration and makes preliminary and final background check determinations.

b. If the procedure is different for National Background checks, including the name-based NCIC NSOR check and FBI fingerprint check, please describe here.

The Lead Agency receives all in-state background check records through data integrations with its child care regulatory database, WISCCRS. The Wisconsin Department of Justice submits the following background check records through the WISCCRS integration: 1. fingerprint-based FBI criminal history; 2. fingerprint-based state criminal history; and 3. name-based NCIC National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) records. The Lead Agency receives additional background check information through WISCCRS integration: 1. child protective services database maintained by the Lead Agency; 2. sex offender registry records; 3. in-state online court records from the Consolidated Court Automation Program (CCAP) system; 4. professional license history from the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS); and 5. child care regulatory history maintained by the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency's Child Care Background Unit (CBU) reviews the background check records received through data integration and makes preliminary and final background check determinations.

c. Describe the procedures for conducting Interstate Background Check requests and making a determination of eligibility. (Note this response should detail how a state conducts an interstate check for a provider who currently lives in their state or territory but has lived in another state(s) within the previous five years).

The Lead Agency provides instructions to request an interstate criminal history check for former Wisconsin residents. The instructions are available online at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>. Out-of-state entities can request Wisconsin DOJ criminal history checks online by using the Wisconsin Online Record Check System (WORCS) at (<https://recordcheck.doj.wi.gov/>) <https://recordcheck.doj.wi.gov/>. There is a \$10 fee for each record request.

d. Describe the procedure the Lead Agency has in place to make an eligibility determination in the event not all the components of the background check are completed within the required 45-day timeframe.

The Lead Agency makes every reasonable effort to complete all components of the background check within the 45-day timeframe. However, there are times when interstate background checks are delayed due to pending information from other states. If

the Lead Agency has not received the interstate background check results by day 44, it makes an eligibility determination based on all of the other background check components that have been completed. If the Lead Agency receives potentially adverse information from other states after an eligibility determination has been made, the Lead Agency reviews the new background check results and issues a notice of eligibility redetermination to the individual and the child care program.

e. Describe procedures for conducting a check when the state of residence is different than the state in which the staff member works.

The Lead Agency conducts interstate criminal, sex offender, and child abuse and neglect background checks for any individual who has lived outside of Wisconsin within the last five years. This procedure includes individuals whose state of residence is different than the state in which they work. The Lead Agency has created and maintains a repository of state-by-state instructions for requesting interstate background checks. Per each state's request instructions, the Lead Agency obtains any signed release forms that the other state may require and submits release the release forms, applicable fees and request forms to the other state on behalf of the child care staff member. Once the Lead Agency receives the requested interstate background check information, it reviews the information and makes a final eligibility decision.

5.5.4 "Compact State" and participation in the National Fingerprint File program

State designation as a "Compact State" and participation in the National Fingerprint File program.

a. "Compact States" are states that have ratified the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact Act of 1998 in order to facilitate electronic information sharing for noncriminal justice purposes (such as employment) among the Federal Government and states. More information can be found here: <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/compact-council>. The Compact allows signatory states to disseminate its criminal history record information to other states for noncriminal justice purposes in accordance with the laws of the receiving state. For the most up-to-date Compact States and Territories map visit: <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/compact-council/maps>. Is your state or territory a Compact State?

No
 Yes

b. The National Fingerprint File (NFF) is a database of fingerprints, or other unique personal identification information relating to an arrested or charged individual, which is maintained by the FBI to provide positive fingerprint identification of record subjects. Only a state or territory that has ratified the Compact (a Compact State) may join the NFF program. An FBI fingerprint check satisfies the requirement to perform an interstate check of another state's criminal history record repository if the responding state (where the child care staff member has resided within the past 5 years) participates in the NFF program. It is unnecessary to conduct both the FBI fingerprint check and the search of an NFF state's criminal history record repository (refer to CCDF-ACF-PIQ-2017-01). For the most up-to-date NFF Participation map visit: <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/compact-council/maps>. Is your state or territory an NFF State?

No
 Yes

5.5.5 Respond to Interstate Background Checks

Procedures for a Lead Agency to Respond to Interstate Background Checks: Interstate

a. Criminal History Registry Check Procedures

Provide a description of how the state or territory responds to interstate criminal history check requests from another state and whether there are any laws or policies that prevent the state from releasing certain criminal history information to an out-of-state entity for civil purpose (i.e., for purposes of determining employment eligibility).

Out-of-state entities can request a criminal history search through the Wisconsin's Department of Justice by accessing the Wisconsin Online Record Check System (WORCS) public search site at <https://recordcheck.doj.wi.gov/>. There is a \$10 fee for each record request. Wisconsin is an open records state and does not have statute or policy preventing the release of criminal history. The Lead Agency's background check website at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate> also provides instructions on how to request criminal history through WORCS.

b. Interstate Sex Offender Registry Check Procedures

Provide a description of how the state or territory responds to interstate sex offender history check requests from another state and whether there are any laws or policies that prevent the state from releasing certain sex offender information to an out-of-state entity for civil purpose (i.e., for purposes of determining employment eligibility).

Out-of-state entities can request a sex offender search through Wisconsin's Department of Corrections by accessing the Sex Offender Registry online search at (<https://appsdoc.wi.gov/public>) <https://appsdoc.wi.gov/public>. Wisconsin is an open records state and does not have statute or policy preventing the release of sex offender information available to the public. The Lead Agency's background check website at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate> also provides instructions on how to access the Sex Offender Registry.

c. Interstate Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Check Procedures

Provide a description of how the state or territory responds to interstate child abuse and neglect history check requests from another state and whether there are any laws or policies that prevent the state from releasing certain child abuse and neglect information to an out-of-state entity for civil purpose (i.e., for purposes of determining employment eligibility).

Out-of-state government entities can request child abuse and neglect information by contacting the Lead Agency's Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (CPS) for Milwaukee County or the specific county's Child Protective Services agency for the rest of the state. The Lead Agency's background check website at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate> provides instructions on how to request child abuse and neglect records. Wisconsin Statute 48.981(7) restricts access to CPS records to protect the confidentiality of children and abuse reporters. However, 48.981(7)(a)17. permits the release of this information to, ☐A federal agency, state agency of this state or any other state or local governmental unit located in this state or any other state that has a need for a report or record in order to carry out its responsibility to protect children from abuse or neglect or to protect unborn children from abuse.☐

5.5.6 Consumer Education Website Links to Interstate Background Check Processes

Lead Agencies must have requirements, policies, and procedures in place to respond as expeditiously as possible to other States', Territories' and Tribes' requests for background checks in order to meet the 45-day timeframe (98.43(a)(1)(iii)). In addition, Lead Agencies are _____

required to include on their consumer education website the process by which another Lead Agency may submit a background check request, along with all of the other background check policies and procedures (98.43 (g)).

State and Territory Lead Agencies are required to designate one page of their existing Consumer Education Website as a landing page for all interstate background check related processes and procedures pertaining to their own state. The purpose of having a dedicated interstate background check web page on the Lead Agency Consumer Education Website is to help state and territories implement the interstate background check requirements of the CCDBG Act (CCDF Consumer Education Website and Reports of Serious Injuries and Death (OMB #0970-0473)).

Check to certify that the required elements are included on the Lead Agency's consumer education website for each interstate background check component, and provide the direct URL/website link.

Note: The links provided below should be a part of your consumer education website identified in 2.3.11.

a. Interstate Criminal Background Check:

i. Agency Name

ii. Address

iii. Phone Number

iv. Email

v. FAX

vi. Website

vii. Instructions ((e.g. Does a portal/system account need to be created to make a request? What types of identification are needed? What types of payment is accepted? How can a provider appeal the results? How will forms will be accepted and FAQs?)

viii. Forms

ix. Fees

x. Is the state a National Fingerprint File (NFF) state?

xi. Is the state a National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact State?

xii. Direct URL/website link to where this information is posted.

Enter direct URL/website link:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>

b. Interstate Sex Offender Registry (SOR) Check:

i. Agency Name

ii. Address

iii. Phone Number

iv. Email

v. FAX

vi. Website

vii. Instructions ((e.g. Does a portal/system account need to be created to make a request? What types of identification are needed? What types of payment is accepted? How can a provider appeal the results? How will forms will be accepted and FAQs?)

viii. Forms

ix. Fees

x. Direct URL/website link to where this information is posted.

Enter direct URL/website link:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>

c. Interstate Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Registry Check:

i. Agency Name

ii. Is the CAN check conducted through a County Administered Registry or Centralized Registry?

iii. Address

iv. Phone Number

v. Email

vi. FAX

vii. Website

viii. Instructions ((e.g. Does a portal/system account need to be created to make a request? What types of identification is needed? What types of payment is accepted? How can a provider appeal the results? How will forms will be accepted and FAQs?)

ix. Forms

x. Fees

xi. Description of information that may be included in a response to a CAN registry check (including substantiated instances of child abuse and neglect accompanied by the State’s definition of “substantiated” instances of child abuse and neglect.

xii. Direct URL/website link to where this information is posted.

Enter direct URL/website link:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/outofstate>

5.5.7 Child Care Staff Member Disqualification

Child care staff members cannot be employed by a child care provider receiving CCDF subsidy funds if they refuse a background check, make materially false statements in connection with the background check, or are registered or required to be registered on the state or National Sex Offender Registry (98.43 (c)(1)(i-iii)). Potential staff members also cannot be employed by a provider receiving CCDF funds if they have been convicted of: a felony consisting of murder, child abuse or neglect, crimes against children, spousal abuse, crimes involving rape or sexual assault, kidnapping, arson, physical assault or battery, or—subject to an individual review (at the state/territory’s option)—a drug-related offense

committed during the preceding 5 years; a violent misdemeanor committed as an adult against a child, including the following crimes— child abuse, child endangerment, or sexual assault; or a misdemeanor involving child pornography (98.43(c)(1)(iv-v)).

a. Does the state/territory disqualify child care staff members based on their conviction for any other crimes not specifically listed in 98.43(c)(i)?

No

Yes. If yes, describe other disqualifying crimes and provide the citation:

Wis. Stats. § 48.686(1)(c)(1-12) identify disqualifying offenses that exist on the Wisconsin Barred Crimes List and that supplement the crimes listed in Federal 98.43(c)(i). These offenses are: 125.075(1); 125.085(3)(a)2; 125.105(2)(b); 125.66(3); 125.68(12); 346.63(1), (2), (5), or (6); 940.01; 940.02; 940.05; 940.06; 940.09; 940.12; 940.21; 940.22(2) or (3); 940.23; 940.25; 940.285(2); 940.29; 940.295; 940.302(2)(a)1.b.; 940.305; 941.20(2) or (3); 941.21; 941.30; 942.08; 942.09(2); 943.10(2); 943.201; 943.203; 943.23(1g); 943.32(2); 943.34(1); 943.38(1) or (2); 943.395(1); 943.41(3)(e), (4)(a), (5), (6), or (6m); 943.45(1); 943.455(2); 943.46(2); 943.47(2); 943.50(1m); 943.70(2)(a) or (am) or (3)(a); all sections and subsections from 940.80 through 943.92; 947.01(1); 947.013; 948.21(1)(a); 948.22(2); 948.51(2); and 948.53(2)(b)1.

b. Describe how the Lead Agency notifies the applicant about their eligibility to work in a child care program. This description should detail how the Lead Agency ensures the privacy of background checks. Note: The Lead Agency may not publicly release the results of individual background checks. (98.43(e)(2)(iii)).

Per Wis. Stat. § 48.686(4p) the Lead Agency provides written notices of preliminary and final eligibility to the child care program and the individual subject of the background check. The notices are available online in the program’s Child Care Provider Portal account, the individual’s iChildCare portal account, and by mail to the program and the individual. The notices sent to child care programs provide individuals’ eligibility status but do not reveal any disqualifying offenses or Criminal History Record Information (CHRI). If the individual is ineligible to work or reside in a child care program, the Lead Agency sends a more detailed notice to the individual only. The ineligibility notice includes information on each disqualifying offense, the right to formally appeal the decision, and whether the offenses are eligible for a Rehabilitation Review.

c. Describe whether the state/territory has a review process for individuals disqualified due to a felony drug offense to determine if that individual is still eligible for employment (98.43 (e)(2- 4)).

Individuals with felony drug offense convictions under the Uniform Controlled Substances Act are eligible five years after sentence completion to apply for rehabilitation review. Rehabilitation review is a process that allows the individual an opportunity to demonstrate through clear and convincing evidence that he or she is rehabilitated and not likely to repeat the conduct that led to the criminal conviction or other offense. A review panel determines whether the individual has been rehabilitated and if approved the bar to child care regulatory approval, employment, or household residency is lifted.

5.5.8 Appeals Processes for Background Checks

States and territories shall provide for a process by which a child care program staff member (including a prospective child care staff member) may appeal the results of a background check to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in a staff member’s background report. The state or territory shall ensure that:

- The child care staff member is provided with information related to each

disqualifying crime in a report, along with information/notice on the opportunity to appeal

- A child care staff member will receive clear instructions about how to complete the appeals process for each background check component if the child care staff member wishes to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in such member's background report
- If the staff member files an appeal, the state or territory will attempt to verify the accuracy of the information challenged by the child care staff member, including making an effort to locate any missing disposition information related to the disqualifying crime
- The appeals process is completed in a timely manner for any appealing child care staff member
- Each child care staff member shall receive written notice of the decision. In the case of a negative determination, the decision should indicate 1) the state's efforts to verify the accuracy of information challenged by the child care staff member, 2) any additional appeals rights available to the child care staff member, and 3) information on how the individual can correct the federal or state records at issue in the case. (98.43(e)(3))
- The Lead Agency must work with other agencies that are in charge of background check information and results (such as the Child Welfare office and the State Identification Bureau), to ensure the appeals process is conducted in accordance with the Act.

a. What is the procedure for each applicant to appeal or challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in the background check report? If there are different appeal process procedures for each component of the check, please provide that in this description, including information on which state agency is responsible for handling each type of appeal. Note: The FBI Fingerprint Check, State Criminal Fingerprint, and NCIC NSOR checks are usually conducted by a state's Identification Bureau and **may** have different appeal processes than agencies that conduct the state CAN and state SOR checks.

The Lead Agency provides written notification to individuals whose background check determinations are ineligible. The notice includes an explanation of the specific disqualifying offenses and instructions on how to file an appeal with the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency has a three-step appeal process under Wis. Stat. § 48.686(4s): 1. The individual's appeal is reviewed by the Lead Agency's Child Care Background Unit (CBU). The CBU makes a reasonable, good faith effort to verify the accuracy and completeness of the background check information. The CBU sends the individual written notification of the appeal decision. 2. If individuals are not satisfied with the appeal decision, they may apply for reconsideration from the Lead Agency's Secretary's Office or designee. The Lead Agency sends individuals written notification of the reconsideration decision. 3. Individuals have the right to further appeal the decision by requesting an administrative hearing. Information about the Lead Agency's appeal process is available online on the DCF Appeals Process for Child Care Background Checks web page at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/appeals>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/appeals>. Individuals may also contest the content of their background check records with the specific agency that maintains the information.

b. If the appeals process is different for interstate checks, what is the procedure for each applicant to appeal or challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in the background report for interstate checks?

The Lead Agency provides written notification to individuals whose background check

determinations are ineligible. The notice includes an explanation of the specific disqualifying offenses and instructions on how to file an appeal with the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency has a three-step appeal process under Wis. Stat. § 48.686(4s): 1. The individual's appeal is reviewed by the Lead Agency's Child Care Background Unit (CBU). The CBU makes a reasonable, good faith effort to verify the accuracy and completeness of the background check information. The CBU sends the individual written notification of the appeal decision. 2. If individuals are not satisfied with the appeal decision, they may apply for reconsideration from the Lead Agency's Secretary's Office or designee. The Lead Agency sends individuals written notification of the reconsideration decision. 3. Individuals have the right to further appeal the decision by requesting an administrative hearing. Information about the Lead Agency's appeal process is available online on the DCF Appeals Process for Child Care Background Checks web page at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/appeals>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/appeals>. Individuals may also contest the content of their background check records with the specific agency that maintains the information.

c. Interstate Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Registry Check:

The Lead Agency provides written notification to individuals whose background check determinations are ineligible. The notice includes an explanation of the specific disqualifying offenses and instructions on how to file an appeal with the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency has a three-step appeal process under Wis. Stat. § 48.686(4s): 1. The individual's appeal is reviewed by the Lead Agency's Child Care Background Unit (CBU). The CBU makes a reasonable, good faith effort to verify the accuracy and completeness of the background check information. The CBU sends the individual written notification of the appeal decision. 2. If individuals are not satisfied with the appeal decision, they may apply for reconsideration from the Lead Agency's Secretary's Office or designee. The Lead Agency sends individuals written notification of the reconsideration decision. 3. Individuals have the right to further appeal the decision by requesting an administrative hearing. Information about the Lead Agency's appeal process is available online on the DCF Appeals Process for Child Care Background Checks web page at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/appeals>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccbgcheck/appeals>. Individuals may also contest the content of their background check records with the specific agency that maintains the information.

5.6 Exemptions for Relative Providers

States and territories have the option to exempt relatives (defined in CCDF regulations as grandparents, great-grandparents, siblings if living in a separate residence, aunts, and uncles (98.42(c)) from certain health and safety requirements. Note: This exception applies if the individual cares only for relative children.

Check and describe where applicable the policies that the Lead Agency has regarding exemptions for eligible relative providers for the following health and safety requirements. The description should include the health and safety requirements relatives are exempt from, if applicable, as well as which of the federally defined relatives the exemption applies to.

5.6.1 Licensing Requirements (as described in Section 5.1)

a. Relative providers are exempt from all licensing requirements.

b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of licensing requirements. Describe.

Relative care is exempt from licensure under Wis. Stats. § 48.65(2)(a). However, if the relative _____ wishes to be eligible to receive CCDF funds through the Wisconsin Shares program, the relative

must be either a certified provider under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 202 or licensed under Wis. Admin. Code DCF 250 and comply with all requirements. If a provider would like to become a certified provider for relatives in order to received Wisconsin Shares Subsidy payments the Lead Agency has developed a comprehensive webpage that outlines the licensing requirements: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cccertification>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cccertification>

c. Relative providers must fully comply with all licensing requirements.

5.6.2 Health and Safety Standards (as described in Section 5.2 and 5.3)

a. Relative providers are exempt from all health and safety standard requirements

b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of health and safety standard requirements. Describe.

N/A

c. Relative providers must fully comply with all health and safety standard requirements.

5.6.3 Health and Safety Training (as described in Section 5.3)

a. Relative providers are exempt from all health and safety training requirements.

b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of all health and safety training requirements. Describe.

N/A

c. Relative providers must fully comply with all health and safety training requirements.

5.6.4 Monitoring and Enforcement (as described in Section 5.4)

a. Relative providers are exempt from all monitoring and enforcement requirements.

b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of monitoring and enforcement requirements. Describe.

N/A

c. Relative providers must fully comply with all monitoring and enforcement requirements.

5.6.5 Background Checks (as described in Section 5.5)

a. Relative providers are exempt from all background check requirements.

b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of background check requirements. If checked, identify the background check components that relatives must complete:

i. Criminal registry or repository using fingerprints in the current state of residency

ii. Sex offender registry or repository in the current state of residency

iii. Child abuse and neglect registry and database check in the current state of residency

iv. FBI fingerprint check

v. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) name based search.

vi. Criminal registry or repository in any other state where the individual has

resided in the past five years.

vii. Sex offender registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past five years.

viii. Child abuse and neglect registry or data base in any other state where the individual has resided in the past five years.

c. Relative providers must fully comply with all background check requirements.

6 Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce

This section covers the state or territory framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education (98.44(a)); provides a description of strategies used to strengthen the business practices of child care providers (98.16(z)) and addresses early learning and developmental guidelines.

Lead Agencies are required to reserve and use a portion of their Child Care and Development Fund program expenditures for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care (98.53). This section addresses the quality improvement activities implemented by the Lead Agency related to the support of the child care workforce and the development and implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines. It asks Lead Agencies to describe the measurable indicators of progress used to evaluate state/territory progress in improving the quality of child care services. (98.53 (f)) in either of these two areas.

States and territories are required to describe their framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education for caregivers, teachers, and directors, including those working in school-age care (98.44(a)). This framework is part of a broader systematic approach building on health and safety training (as described in section 5) within a state/territory. States and territories must incorporate their knowledge and application of health and safety standards, early learning guidelines, responses to challenging behavior, and the engagement of families. States and territories are required to establish a progression of professional development opportunities to improve the knowledge and skills of CCDF providers (658E(c)(2)(G)). To the extent practicable, professional development should be appropriate to work with a population of children of different ages, English-language learners, children with disabilities, and Native Americans (98.44(b)(2)(iv)). Training and professional development is one of the options that states and territories have for investing their CCDF quality funds (658G(b)(1)).

6.1 Professional Development Framework

6.1.1 Professional development framework for training and professional development

Each state or territory must describe their professional development framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education for caregivers, teachers and directors in programs that serve children of all ages. This framework should be developed in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body. The framework should include these components:

(1) professional standards and competencies, (2) career pathways, (3) advisory structures, (4) articulation, (5) workforce information, and (6) financing (98.44(a)(3)). Flexibility is provided on the strategies, breadth, and depth with which states and territories will develop and implement their framework.

- a. Describe how the state/territory's framework for training and professional development addresses the following required elements:
- i. State/territory professional standards and competencies. Describe:
The Lead Agency utilizes the Wisconsin Core Competencies for Professionals Working with Young Children & Their Families. The competencies were developed in 2014 as part of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Cross Sector Professional Development Initiative (PDI). These competencies are expectations for what the workforce should know (content) and be able to do (skills) in a respectful and competent manner (attitudes) in their roles working with and/or on behalf of children and their families.
 - ii. Career pathways. Describe:
The Lead Agency contracts with The Registry to administer a comprehensive career lattice, supporting early care and education and school-age workforce career development through verification of completed trainings, college credits, credentials and degrees. This review process determines an individual's placement on The Registry Career Levels and the positions for which s/he is qualified, based on education and training completed. (<https://www.the-registry.org/Portals/0/Career%20Levels%209-2014.pdf>) <https://www.the-registry.org/Portals/0/Career%20Levels%209-2014.pdf>. WECA professional development (PD) counselors are also available to support the workforce understanding of credits offered at each institution of higher education (IHE) and access to T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarship funding. Counselors support individuals as they follow educational pathways that result in stacking of credits into credentials and credentials into degrees.
 - iii. Advisory structure. Describe:
The Lead Agency, DHS, DPI, the ECAC, inclusive of IHEs and other system partners support ongoing improvement of cross-sector alignment on core content and evidence-based practices to ensure consistency and reduce duplication among education providers. The overall goal of the collaboration effort is to a) ensure early care, school-age, and family providers have access to professional development that strengthens understanding of best practices in early education; and b) increase the capacity of Training and Technical Assistance Professionals to support mentoring, coaching, consultation, peer-to-peer technical assistance, and reflective practices for the workforce..
 - iv. Articulation. Describe:
The Lead Agency contracts with WECA to oversee and lead the work of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Higher Education Committee, which brings faculty from two- and four-year IHEs together to discuss revision of existing articulation agreements, new agreements, credit for prior learning, and outreach and support to nontraditional student populations.
 - v. Workforce information. Describe:
Through the Lead Agency's contract with WECA and subcontracts with the Center on Wisconsin Strategy and the University of Wisconsin Survey Center, a study was completed in early 2016 focusing on the landscape of the early childhood workforce. This was the first early care and education workforce study released since the implementation of YoungStar, Wisconsin's QRIS, in 2010. The study provides statewide information regarding child care quality, wages, education levels, and turnover. The response rate for both centers and family child care providers was over 60 percent. This information will inform policy development and budget requests. Full Report: (<https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2016-Workforce-study.pdf>) <https://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/2016-Workforce-study.pdf>. Through PDG funding and in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin Institute for Research on Poverty, this study was repeated in 2020-21 and results are pending.

vi. Financing. Describe:

The Lead Agency uses CCDF funding to support a myriad of professional development initiatives for providers working with children aged birth through twelve, including: enhancing the existing QRIS program; providing and supporting ongoing training and technical assistance for child care providers and staff (including tribal and rural populations); expanding resource and referral services statewide; and supporting compliance with licensing, monitoring, training, and health and safety requirements. In addition, the Wisconsin B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan identified workforce diversity, compensation, and support as its top strategic goal and its Preschool Development Grant partnering agencies allocated a large portion of the \$40 million award (2020-23) to be spent on needs for training, retention, compensation, and increased sustainable funding for early care and education through its Workforce and Community Innovation Grants. PDG also funded (a) a pilot of career preparation opportunities for young adult males of color looking to become early care and education teachers (b) free Registry memberships and renewals for over 13,500 individuals (c) shared services networks (d) scholarships to make credit-based education more affordable (e) social emotional and trauma-informed training and coaching, and more.

b. The following are optional elements, or elements that should be implemented to the extent practicable, in the training and professional development framework.

i. Continuing education unit trainings and credit-bearing professional development to the extent practicable. Describe:

Through multiple contracts for services with WECA and CCR&R agencies, the Lead Agency provides funding for free or reduced-cost non-credit based trainings and technical assistance throughout the state during the entire fiscal year. Additionally, through the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program, the Lead Agency provides funding for credit-based professional development.

ii. Engagement of training and professional development providers, including higher education, in aligning training and educational opportunities with the state/territory's framework. Describe:

In addition to providing currently developed trainings, collaborative workgroups including The Registry Credential Committee and the Professional Development Approval System (PDAS) Committee meet quarterly to discuss revision of existing curricula, development of new trainings/curricula, and any new processes or information sharing strategies. Members include training and technical assistance consultants and WTCS system administrators as well as higher education faculty.

iii. Other. Describe:

N/A

6.1.2 Consultation with state advisory council

Describe how the state/territory developed its professional development framework in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (if applicable) or similar coordinating body if there is no SAC that addresses the professional development, training, and education of child care providers and staff.

The framework was developed through collaborative efforts of the Lead Agency, the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners, The Registry PDAS Committee, and the DPI Office of Early Learning. These agencies have members on the Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) and share findings and recommendations back and forth with the ECAC on a regular basis.

6.1.3 Description of framework

Describe how the framework improves the quality, diversity, stability, and retention of caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.44(a)(7)).

The Lead Agency provides funding for the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program, which pays for 75% of the cost of attending credit-based education in a Wisconsin 2-year or 4-year IHE. T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contracts provide financial assistance to complete stand-alone credits in early childhood education, credential programs (Infant Toddler, Administrator, Preschool, Inclusion, Family Child Care, Afterschool and Youth Development, Leadership, Program Development, Diversity, and Serving Dual Language Learners), as well as Associate’s and Bachelor’s degree paths. Upon successful completion of a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship contract, providers obtain a monetary raise or bonus from both the scholarship program and their employer (if applicable). In addition, the Lead Agency provides funding for the REWARD stipend program, which offers providers stipends if they have attained a certain educational level and remain in the child care field. YoungStar QRIS evaluation criteria 2019/2020 include an indicator that allows programs to demonstrate good business practices. Options to earn this point include: demonstrating that the center provides paid leave for employees or that the family child care provider gives herself or himself paid leave; demonstrating that the center provides health care benefits for employees or that the family child care provider has health insurance for herself or himself and any dependent children; demonstrating that the center contributes to a retirement plan for employees or that the family child care provider has contributed to a retirement plan in the last year. YoungStar evaluation criteria 2021/2022 include “Strategic Planning around Staff Retention.” This indicator can be earned by demonstrating a planning process that is focused on improving the workplace and showing evidence that progress has been made on reaching previous strategic planning goals. The planning process should include the use of recent model work standards resources, involve meetings and contributions from employees, have designated individuals to implement the plan, measure progress, and identify next steps. The T.E.A.C.H. scholarship program has continued its commitment for educators of color across all child care settings. Specifically, the Lead Agency has worked in close collaboration with WECA to provide a comprehensive scholarship package to improve the education, compensation, and retention of educators living in the predominantly African American community in the 53206-zip code of Milwaukee. Additionally, the scholarship program has expanded to include and strengthen relationship with the tribal agencies through a First Nations Pathway Scholarship. Lastly, the program offers newly developed Supporting Dual Language Learners and the Diversity credentials which are available to early educators.

6.2 Training and Professional Development Requirements

The Lead Agency must describe how its established health and safety requirements for pre-service or orientation training and ongoing professional development requirements—as described in Section 5 for caregivers, teachers, and directors in CCDF programs—align, to the extent practicable, with the state/territory professional development framework. These requirements must be designed to enable child care providers to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children and to improve the knowledge and skills of the child care workforce. Such requirements shall be applicable to child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF funds across the entire age span, from birth through age 12 (658E(c)(2)(G)). Ongoing training and professional development should be accessible and appropriate to the setting and age of the children served (98.44(b)(2)).

6.2.1 Training and professional development descriptions

Describe how the state/territory incorporates into training and professional development opportunities:

- the knowledge and application of its early learning and developmental guidelines (where applicable);
- its health and safety standards (as described in section 5);
- and social-emotional/behavioral and mental health intervention models for young children, which can include positive behavior intervention and support models that reduce the likelihood of suspension and expulsion of children (as described in Section 2 of the Pre-Print) (98.44(b)).

The Lead Agency works directly with contracted agencies to deliver and support professional development offerings to providers. Wisconsin ensures the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) and Child Care Regulation information are integrated into trainings created within the professional development framework through direct and frequent meetings with individual agencies. Representatives from the Bureaus of YoungStar and Early Care Regulation work with contracted agencies, including The Registry, Supporting Families Together Association, Child Care Resource and Referrals, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, and Institutes of Higher Education to put new, department-approved trainings through a rigorous and collaborative review to ensure the fidelity and quality of new trainings. Through a contract with the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (WI-AIMH), the Lead Agency supports the development and revisions of social emotional trainings that include alternatives to suspension and expulsion. A variety of training content has been developed (with additional options currently being created) including a foundational challenging behaviors/social emotional training available to all educators free of charge and specifically targeted to teachers entering the field. The T&TA network in Wisconsin utilizes both the WMELS and the Pyramid Model as frameworks that are incorporated into all training content. Several members of the T&TA network have been supported to attend the one-year Infant, Preschool, and Family Mental Health Capstone program, allowing these professionals to use a mental health lens when providing services to providers and developing training. The Lead Agency contracts with WI-AIMH to pilot training and coaching on the development of positive guidance policies while supporting staff in developing positive guidance strategies. The information gained from the pilot program will be used by early childhood trainers and infant mental health consultants to develop more expansive programming on creating policies that begin to eliminate suspension and expulsion. The Behavior Help program is currently being piloted in two areas of the state. The Behavior Help team utilizes their expertise in child development (WMELS), infant, preschool and family mental health, and relationship-based strategies (Pyramid Model) to assist educators in promoting positive behaviors, emotional regulation, and social skills. As proactive measures to preventing suspension and expulsion in early childhood settings, providers are encouraged to obtain additional training on social-emotional behavioral health and child guidance through the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards training (<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels>) <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels>, as well as the Wisconsin Pyramid Model Training for Social and Emotional Development: (<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wi-pyramid-model>) <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wi-pyramid-model>.

Current administrative rules provide guidance around the use of time-out periods to deal with challenging behavior and the development of a written child guidance policy. Administrative rules also prohibit actions that may be psychologically, emotionally, or physically painful,

discomforting, dangerous, or potentially injurious such as spanking, shaking, corporal punishment, physical restraints, and confinement. (Wis. Admin. Code DCF 250.07(2) Programming: Child Guidance (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/4069.pdf>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/publications/pdf/4069.pdf>.) Licensing Specialists within the Bureau of Early Care Regulation work with trainers at the regional CCR&R offices to create professional development opportunities to support providers who have been issued non-compliances, with emphasis on supervision of children, child abuse and neglect reporting, and guidance strategies. Opportunities for Licensing Specialists to attend WMELS and Pyramid Model training are made available to ensure a common language is being used with providers. The Lead Agency funded the creation of a Trauma-Informed Care Approach to Afterschool Programs training designed to support providers serving school-age children who have experienced trauma and/or adversities. This training specifically addresses the unique needs of school-age children and their families. It was delivered across the state and is now available in a virtual learning format. The Lead Agency is continually reviewing training formats to ensure that the needs of everyone are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of everyone. Additionally, the Lead Agency continues to further incorporate professional development trainings in the areas of health and safety standards through preservice, orientation, and ongoing training opportunities. For example, the Lead Agency's website contains numerous online training resources for child care providers of all types. Some trainings include computer-based training (CBT) modules, SIDS training, shaken baby syndrome, and links to other child specific training and resources.

6.2.2 Accessibility of professional development for tribes and tribal organizations

Describe how the state/territory's training and professional development are accessible to providers supported through Indian tribes or tribal organizations receiving CCDF funds (as applicable) (98.44(b)(2)(vi)).

The Lead Agency has established a contract with SFTA to facilitate professional development and collaborative planning with the Wisconsin Inter-Tribal Child Care Association (WITCCA). WITCCA, which includes representation from all 11 tribes, holds four to five annual meetings organized by SFTA using agendas developed by the tribal agencies. Development of a large Approved Trainer and Consultant capacity in tribal agencies is an ongoing priority. SFTA is responsible for training members of tribal communities to become trainers for key early education related trainings, as requested. Recent trainings have been completed around Developmentally Appropriate Environments and Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, and they are tailored to support YoungStar quality criteria implementation for Wisconsin tribes. Based on priorities and interest from the tribal agencies, SFTA also coordinates opportunities to expand trainer and/or consultant capacity around other ECE related topics. The Lead Agency supports an annual conference that brings together personnel from each tribal agency. Planning for this conference reflects the specific topics identified by the tribes, including training on historical trauma, family engagement practices, drug abuse prevention, stress, and burnout. The Lead Agency also contracts with local CCR&R agencies to create and execute plans to provide targeted outreach and onsite consultation to tribal and/or rural providers in their communities. Agencies are contracted to complete activities such as: engaging family child care providers in tribal and/or rural communities; providing outreach to automated 2-Star tribal and/or rural providers; delivering additional, supplemental onsite consultation to 2 or 3-Star rated tribal and/or rural providers to focus on needs identified by the provider; and customizing training to meet the needs of tribal and/or rural communities. The Lead

Agency is continually reviewing training formats to ensure that the needs of everyone are met. This includes the development of Computer Based Training (CBT) modules, face-to-face sessions, and webinar-based trainings. The Lead Agency understands the need to offer training in multiple formats to better serve the learning styles of everyone. Additionally, the Lead Agency is anticipating the development of a workgroup to develop trainings that are culturally appropriate and inclusive of the needs of specific tribes.

6.2.3 Accessibility for providers with limited English proficiency and disabilities

States/territories are required to facilitate participation of child care providers with limited English proficiency and disabilities in the subsidy system (98.16 (dd)). Describe how the state/territory will recruit and facilitate the participation of providers in the subsidy system:

a. with limited English proficiency.

Wisconsin has a comprehensive system of professional development that supports learners of all abilities and backgrounds. Through onsite support and mentoring services provided by CCR&R Agencies, child care providers are recruited to participate in professional development opportunities in multiple languages (including English, Spanish, and Hmong), through a variety of local contracted agencies (independent training facilities, technical and private colleges, and the University of Wisconsin system), and in a variety of training formats (online, in community settings, one-on-one). CCR&R agencies provide training and technical assistance to child care providers and potential child care providers through community-based delivery. CCR&Rs ensure staff are available to deliver training and technical assistance in Spanish and Hmong to support recruitment and retention of child care providers and to provide individualized referrals to families seeking child care providers that speak their home language or that serve children with special needs. The Lead Agency has partnered with contracted agencies and Wisconsin IHEs to ensure that credit and non-credit based professional development opportunities are available in multiple languages, through multiple media (online, in-person), and in more local community sites. Milwaukee Early Care Administration (MECA) provides informational workshops and educational opportunities for Spanish and Hmong providers using language translation/interpretation services.

b. who have disabilities.

Future educators are encouraged to work with local CCR&R agencies who respond to community needs and develop trainings that fit their needs, language, life, and abilities. Local colleges and universities have systems in place to ensure that learners can access training in primary languages and that students with special needs are able to attend local or online training events and coursework. Most online trainings include a real-time transcript of the information for persons with hearing loss.

6.2.4 Training and professional development requirements for CCDF providers

Describe how the state/territory's training and professional development requirements are appropriate, to the extent practicable, for child care providers who care for children receiving child care subsidies, including children of different age groups (such as specialized credentials for providers who care for infants and/or school-age children); English-language learners; children with developmental delays and disabilities; and Native Americans, including Indians as defined in Section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (including Alaska Natives) and Native Hawaiians (98.44(b)(2)(iv)).

The Lead Agency works with training agencies to ensure that professional development offerings are

appropriate for providers who work with diverse communities of children. YoungStar participation is mandatory for programs that accept payments from families participating in Wisconsin Shares. All YoungStar supported professional development opportunities are appropriate for providers that work with children from families receiving subsidies.

Early Childhood Credentials were created to give providers access to specific credit-based coursework (12 - 18 credits each) that reflects the needs of their community and the children they work with. To target providers that work with specific age groups, Wisconsin offers the specialized Infant Toddler, Preschool, Afterschool and Youth Development, Administrator, Family Child Care, Leadership, Program Development, and Inclusion credentials. The Supporting Dual Language Learners and Diversity credentials were recently developed to support providers who serve families of multilingual children and families with diverse cultural backgrounds. The Registry Board and Credential Committee review and approve curricula for the credential coursework. The Registry is responsible for storing, updating and distributing resources for credential instructors statewide. <https://the-registry.org/ResourceCenter/Credentials.html>. Additionally, the Lead Agency has used PDG funds to contract with WIDA at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to offer webinars, professional learning modules, and a promising practices toolkit about working with multilingual learners in the early years.

The Lead Agency provides funding for the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program which pays for 75% of the cost of attending credit-based education – including the credential courses – in a Wisconsin 2-year or 4-year IHE. The Lead Agency partners with contracted agencies and Wisconsin IHEs to ensure that credit and non-credit based professional development opportunities are available in multiple languages, through multiple mediums (online, in-person), and in more local community sites. For example, the Infant Toddler, Preschool, Family Child Care, Administrator, and Supporting Dual Language Learners credentials are offered in Spanish by the University of Wisconsin-Platteville online (<https://www.uwplatt.edu/department/child-care-education>). The Lead Agency works closely with tribal nations to develop trainings that are culturally appropriate. The Lead Agency worked collaboratively with tribal nations and providers to develop trainings on the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and the Wisconsin Pyramid Model that are culturally appropriate and fit the needs of tribal providers. The Registry, Wisconsin's child care trainer and training approval system, integrates culturally appropriate practice in all train-the-trainer events and empowers trainers to support the needs of tribal communities when leading trainings. All approved Registry trainings must include a Diversity Inclusion Statement explaining how the training delivery and content is reflective of the unique needs of the communities in which the training is delivered. The Lead Agency continues to provide support to families and providers through the Early Childhood Inclusion webpage: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci>. This page contains information on topics such as the ADA, best practices, adapting activities, providing supports, policy statements, making referrals, etc., along with links to additional information. The webpage is continually updated and added to as new resources become available. It provides parents and providers with information that can be used to support the inclusion of children with disabilities. The Lead Agency developed a five-module series entitled Wisconsin UNITES – Understanding the Need for Inclusive Training and Educational Support: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/trainings>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/trainings>. The training series is self-guided and provides child care providers, directors, and owners with foundational information and best practices around inclusion. It provides ongoing assistance to child care programs to become more inclusive in their policies and general management, their practices, supports, environments and activities that they provide to the children in their care. The Lead Agency also created computer-based training videos on Supporting the Needs of Children with Autism in Early Care and Education Programs. These trainings are available on the YoungStar Early Childhood Inclusion webpage where providers can view them on an as-needed basis. The videos provide information and strategies for

supporting children with disabilities and their families.

6.2.5 Training and technical assistance to identify families experiencing homelessness

The Lead Agency must provide training and technical assistance (TA) to providers and appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving children and families experiencing homelessness (658E(c)(3)(B)(i)).

a. Describe the state/territory's training and TA efforts for providers in identifying and serving children and their families experiencing homelessness (relates to question 3.2.2).

The Lead Agency collaborated with what was at the time the State Cross Sector Homelessness Task Force to develop a Homelessness Tool Kit to help serve families and children experiencing homelessness. The tool kit contains resources and information for how child care programs can assist families and children experiencing homelessness. A set of modules was created to complement the information found in the tool kit. The tool kit and modules, as well as other homelessness resources, can be found on the Collaborating Partners website (<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/diverse-populations/homelessness/>) <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/diverse-populations/homelessness/>) or on the YoungStar Homelessness webpage (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/homelessness>) (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/homelessness>). Through braided funding, a Regional Early Childhood Outreach Specialist was contracted to support children and families experiencing homelessness. This specialist disseminates materials and provides or facilitates professional learning opportunities around the topic of homelessness. The YoungStar Homelessness webpage also contains links to other state agencies, specific information for Milwaukee County residents, and resources that technical assistance providers can use to support the child care providers who care for children of families experiencing homelessness. The Lead Agency works to disseminate the tool kit and modules to Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, as well as other state agencies, that are in direct contact with families that may be experiencing homelessness. These agencies also inform families about how to access Wisconsin Shares child care funding so their children can attend, or continue to attend, a high-quality child care program.

b. Describe the state/territory's training and TA efforts for Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff in identifying and serving children and their families experiencing homelessness (connects to question 3.3.6).

Lead Agency staff have received training on homelessness and poverty in early care and education. Lead Agency staff work in collaboration with the DPI McKinney-Vento Homeless Program Team to share and disseminate information. The Lead Agency also works and meets with the Regional Early Childhood Outreach Specialists that are part of Collaborating Partners. These specialists help to connect and support the different regions of the state through training opportunities and resources. Continuing the work started with the State Cross Sector Homelessness Task Force, the Lead Agency works to strengthen its collaboration and coordination with Head Start Directors, WCCAA, ECAC, statewide CCR&R agencies and, through DPI, with Wisconsin Homeless Education Coordinators, to help ensure that young children experiencing homelessness are accessing quality early childhood programs. The Lead Agency continues to encourage collaboration and individual partnerships at the local level to expand capacity to meet the needs of families and children experiencing homelessness. This includes, but is not limited to, local educational agencies/school districts/local homeless liaisons, local early intervention or early learning councils, Head Start and Early Head Start programs, local child care providers, HUD Continuums of Care, domestic violence shelters, homeless coalitions, CCR&R agencies, and the Salvation Army.

6.2.6 Strategies to strengthen business practices

Lead Agencies must develop and implement strategies to strengthen the business practices of child care providers to expand the supply and to improve the quality of child care services (98.16 (z)). Describe the state/territory's strategies to strengthen providers' business practices, which can include training and/or TA efforts.

- a. Describe the strategies that the state/territory is developing and implementing for strengthening child care providers' business practices.

The Lead Agency provides a myriad of trainings, resources and technical assistance focusing on best business practices through contracts with WECA, SFTA and CCR&Rs. YoungStar consultants and trainers are provided with training to support providers' business practices. Training opportunities are offered to all early childhood programs in Wisconsin, both in person and online. Professional development opportunities assist individual programs' quality improvement goals and support programs in meeting the requirements of the YoungStar evaluation criteria. Technical assistance is available to child care programs onsite or virtually and can include business practices if the provider chooses. The Business Practices element in the YoungStar evaluation criteria includes a mandatory indicator for all 3, 4, and 5 Star providers, requiring programs to have a yearly budget, do budget reviews, have payment agreements, and maintain records. Additionally, there are high-quality practices required at higher star ratings focused on high-quality employment policies and strategic planning for staff retention for group and school-age programs. The family child care criteria also include high-quality practices for higher star ratings, including high-quality family handbooks and implementing strategies to reduce risk. Business Tool Kits containing a wealth of information related to owning and operating a child care business are available by various CCR&R agencies with consultation from pre-licensing specialists. Additional resources are available for providers on the YoungStar website: (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources>. The Lead Agency funds WECA to implement the Wisconsin Early Education Shared Services Network (license holder of the CCA for Social Good shared resources platform), which provides business practice supports, including support around payroll, benefits management, banking, collections, staffing services, and/or marketing. Improved business practices are also among the goals of the 53206 initiative for Milwaukee providers, Lead Agency-supported shared services networks, and Workforce Grants.

- b. Check the topics addressed in the state/territory's strategies for strengthening child care providers' business practices. Check all that apply.

i. Fiscal management

ii. Budgeting

iii. Recordkeeping

iv. Hiring, developing, and retaining qualified staff

v. Risk management

vi. Community relationships

vii. Marketing and public relations

viii. Parent-provider communications, including who delivers the training, education, and/or technical assistance

ix. Other. Describe:

N/A

6.3 Supporting Training and Professional Development of the Child Care Workforce with CCDF Quality Funds

Lead Agencies can invest CCDF quality funds in the training, professional development, and post-secondary education of the child care workforce as part of a progression of professional development activities, such as those included at 98.44 of the CCDF Rule, and those included in the activities to improve the quality of child care also addressed in Section 7 (98.53(a)(1)).

6.3.1 Training and professional development of the child care workforce.

a. In the table below, describe which content is included in training and professional development activities and how an entity is funded to address this topic. Then identify which types of providers are included in these activities. Check all that apply.

i. Promoting the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children, including those efforts related to nutrition and physical activity, using scientifically based, developmentally appropriate, and age- appropriate strategies (98.53 (a)(1)(i)(A)). Describe the content and funding:

Pyramid Model (PM) for Social Emotional Competence ☑ birth to 5 content and infant toddler content is provided both in person and online, with reflective online coaching. The Lead Agency continues to significantly subsidize the cost for online training, increasing access and affordability of training. The content includes relationships, environments, emotional literacy, problem solving, and functional behavior planning. The trainings are balanced to include lecture, video, reflection, action planning, and opportunity to practice.

Additional evidence and research-based trainings promoting social emotional development include: Promoting Mental Health in Young Children, which focuses on 3- to 6-year-olds and considers brain development, relationship building, adapting environments, and behavior planning; Intensive Interventions, which focuses on behavior planning, teaching replacement skills, supporting families, and collaborating with a team of professionals; and, for afterschool programs, Tribes training and Guiding Children's Behavior in School-Age Care. These two trainings support the use of positive child guidance, strategies to reduce challenging behaviors, and the importance of relationships. The Lead Agency contracts with SFTA to offer the following trainings statewide and report quarterly attendance and evaluation information to the Lead Agency: Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (introduction to Wisconsin's learning standards, observation, assessment, five developmental domains, teaching cycle), Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Development, School-Age Curricular Framework, Wisconsin Early Care & Education Physical Activity, and Germs, Worms, Mud and Crud. The Lead Agency has contracted, for the development of a two-hour foundational, online social and emotional course which will be made available at no charge to providers. Finally, the Community Innovation Grants prioritized funding for multiple local projects to increase Farm to ECE initiatives supporting children's access to outdoor activities, science curriculum, and learning about good nutrition through gardening and related activities.

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

ii. Implementing behavior management strategies, including positive behavior interventions and support models that promote positive social-emotional development and the mental health of young children and that reduce challenging behaviors, including a reduction in expulsions of preschool- age children from birth to age five for such behaviors. (See also section 2.4.5.) (98.53(a)(1)(iii)). Describe the content and funding:

The Lead Agency contracts with WI-AIMH to plan, develop and maintain Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence and related content. WI-AIMH staff are represented on the ECAC and the statewide Expulsion and Suspension Committee to ensure alignment in messaging and content across disciplines. WI-AIMH utilizes a multi-disciplinary Advisory Committee to meet the needs of the state and reach Statewide Benchmarks of Quality. The Lead Agency has developed a contractual relationship with DPI through braided funding to ensure that opportunities for Wisconsin Pyramid Model Training exist throughout Wisconsin, in school district settings, Head Start and child care programming. Coaching opportunities are available to deepen learning and promote implementation of practices. Challenging behaviors, mental health, and positive behavior intervention are all in the Pyramid Model content. Wisconsin is intently focused on increasing the capacity and understanding of our TA workforce on concepts such as suspension and expulsion.

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

iii. Engaging parents and families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to expand their knowledge, skills, and capacity to become meaningful partners in supporting their children's positive development. (98.53(a)(1)(iv)). Describe the content and funding:

The Lead Agency has worked to ensure a variety of resource materials have been developed to support child care programs/providers in engaging families, including Family Engagement Guiding Principles to provide evidence-based practices supported by research, and tip sheets to support families in understanding how the Early Learning Standards can help them to think about what their children should know and be able to do. The following trainings are provided directly to child care providers who then offer the training to families in their care: Promoting Interactions with Infants and Positive Solutions for Families. The content of these trainings focuses on how to play, development, developmental expectations, and creating networks of support. The Lead Agency contracts with SFTA to offer Family Engagement and Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education trainings throughout the state, offered by trainers employed at CCR&Rs. These trainings focus on family engagement, child development, family communication, home and school connections, community resources and collaborations.

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

iv. Implementing developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, and evidence-based curricula, and designing learning environments that are aligned with state/territory early learning and developmental standards (98.15 (a)(9)). Describe the content and funding:

The Lead Agency contracts with SFTA to provide trainings throughout the state. The WMELS and the WMELS (Tribal focus), Developmentally Appropriate Practices, Developmentally Appropriate Environments, Learning Environments through the Lens of DAP trainings include culturally relevant and responsive instruction and focus on environment design. The content in these trainings supports providers to increase their knowledge and understanding of culturally relevant practices and to earn the required YoungStar indicator, Developmentally Appropriate Environments, in the Learning Environment and Curriculum section of the criteria.

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

v. Providing onsite or accessible comprehensive services for children and developing community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development. Describe the content and funding:

Local CCR&Rs connect families to resources and other services in their communities around child development, developmental screening, human and social services agency programming, Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program requirements, WIC, FoodShare, W-2, Child Find, Energy Assistance, and services to support families experiencing homelessness. Services are available via phone, walk-in, or online. CCR&R agencies also connect families to parenting programs and Family Resource Center activities.

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

vi. Using data to guide program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement 98.53(a)(1)(ii)). Describe the content and funding:

SFTA gathers and reviews all professional development training evaluations and reports statistics (number of trainings as well as average scores of evaluations) as well as anecdotal information quarterly to the Lead Agency. In addition, SFTA has started to implement and will continue to provide a training call every other month for consultants around the state to share ideas and information related to trainings (examples include reviewing evaluations to make future training adjustments, marketing and developing new trainings, and tips and tricks for ice breakers and activities used with the statewide trainings).

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

vii. Caring for children of families in geographic areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment. Describe the content and funding:

The Lead Agency mandates participation in the state's QRIS for all providers accepting subsidy funding. When programs participate, they receive specific onsite and off-site technical assistance and mentoring. This support occurs in areas with high concentrations of poverty, including rural, urban, and tribal communities. Targeted outreach and messaging in urban areas has resulted in child care providers increasing quality and accepting Wisconsin Shares authorizations. The Lead Agency also funds an annual Pathways to Quality Conference in the greater Milwaukee area to support early care and education professionals by providing professional development related to best practices and evidence-based approaches for quality early learning. This conference provides opportunities for child care directors, teachers, and family child care providers to network with others from the greater Milwaukee area. The Lead Agency also contracts with SFTA and the CCR&R network to offer trainings to ECE and school-age care providers that promote understanding of children from diverse backgrounds, including those from low-income families. These trainings include: Strengthening families through ECE settings, the national six-course Protective Factors Framework training series, Equity & Inclusion in Afterschool Settings, Creating a Sense of Belonging in Early Childhood Settings, and Family Engagement through Partnering with Families for Children's Success.

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

viii. Caring for and supporting the development of children with disabilities and developmental delays 98.53 (a)(1)(i)(B). Describe the content and funding:

The Lead Agency is collaborating with DPI to create in-depth training that will build upon the training series Wisconsin UNITES - Understanding the Need for Inclusive Training and Educational Support and include information and resources from the early childhood special education section of DPI. The training will provide an historical perspective on inclusion along with information and tools for implementing best practices for supporting children with special needs in early care and education settings. The Wisconsin UNITES trainings are available at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/trainings>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/trainings> and give providers access to inclusion related information and supports around developing policies, setting up environments, and creating and modifying activities. The Lead Agency also has online inclusion trainings/presentations around Autism Spectrum Disorder and Modifying Activities and Materials available at:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/eci/>. The Lead Agency webpage contains resources and links to additional information on topics such as the ADA, best practices, adapting activities, providing supports, policy statements, making referrals, etc. It is continually updated and added to as new resources become available. These pages provide parents and providers with information that can be used to support the inclusion of children with disabilities. Coaching and technical assistance will be offered to support a program as it implements its improvement plan.

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

ix. Supporting the positive development of school-age children (98.53(a)(1)(iii). Describe the content and funding:

The Lead Agency is an active partner in the Wisconsin Afterschool Network (WAN). This collaborative group is composed of various agencies focused on the professional development of providers of school-age care. Afterschool programs are equipped with the knowledge of how to be trauma-informed and trauma-responsive. They can play a vital role in not only identifying a need for trauma-related intervention, but providing engaging experiences that build positive adaptive skills and social and emotional skills for children who, at the end of their school day, may have exhausted their self-regulation capacity. WAN, in tandem with the Lead Agency, has created a blended model for the School Age Curricular Framework, Guiding Children’s Behavior in School Age Programs, and Child Outcomes, Assessments and Documentation Training. Various modalities for the trainings (e.g., online, webinars, training institutes) are available.

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

x. Other. Describe:

N/A

Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

b. Check how the state/territory connects child care providers with available federal and state/territory financial aid or other resources to pursue post-secondary education relevant for the early childhood and school-age workforce and then identify which providers are eligible for this activity. Check all that apply.

What content is included under each of these training topics and what type of funds are used for this activity?

i. Coaches, mentors, consultants, or other specialists available to support access to post-secondary training, including financial aid and academic counseling.

Licensed center-based

License exempt center-based

Licensed family child care home

License-exempt family child care home

In-home care (care in the child's own home)

ii. Statewide or territory-wide, coordinated, and easily accessible clearinghouse (i.e., an online calendar, a listing of opportunities) of relevant post-secondary education opportunities.

iii. Financial awards such as scholarships, grants, loans, or reimbursement for expenses and/or training, from the state/territory to complete post-secondary education.

Licensed center-based

License exempt center-based

Licensed family child care home

License-exempt family child care home

In-home care (care in the child's own home)

iv. Other. Describe:

Free post-secondary courses, offered in community-based sites, for providers from historically marginalized communities.

Licensed center-based

License exempt center-based

Licensed family child care home

License-exempt family child care home

In-home care (care in the child's own home)

6.3.2 Measurable indicators of progress

Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 6.3 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency tracks several measures to evaluate the improvement in quality child care programs and services related to professional development: ☐ Workforce information about retention and continuity ☐ Providers with specific trainings that are of interest to the Lead Agency ☐ Trainings provided and taken by providers across the state ☐ Evaluations of trainings ☐ Scholarships awarded ☐ Retention stipends awarded ☐ Registry career level movement and educational attainment ☐ Technical assistance provided to families through the CCR&R agencies ☐ Referral services provided to families through the CCR&R agencies. The Lead Agency measures the technical assistance services given to child care programs by the CCR&R agencies across the state/region, assessing key needs, strengths, and attainment of quality improvement goals. The Lead Agency generates data reports that analyze program improvement in specific quality indicators, such as developmentally appropriate environments or high-quality practices, over time for the state/regions. The Lead Agency sets service delivery goals/standards and runs quarterly reports to make sure that the goals have been met.

6.4 Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines

6.4.1 Implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines

States and territories are required to develop, maintain, or implement early learning and developmental guidelines that are appropriate for children in a forward progression from birth to kindergarten entry (i.e., birth to three, three to five, birth to five), describing what children should know and be able to do and covering the essential domains of early childhood development. These early learning and developmental guidelines are to be used statewide and territory-wide by child care providers and in the development and implementation of training and professional development (658E(c)(2)(T)). The required essential domains for these guidelines are cognition, including language arts and mathematics; social, emotional, and physical development; and approaches toward learning (98.15(a)(9)). At the option of the state/territory, early learning and developmental guidelines for out-of-school time may be developed. Note: States and territories may use the quality set-aside, discussed in section 7, to improve on the development or implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines.

a. Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines address the following requirements:

- i. Are research-based.

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) have positively impacted the quality of child care, Head Start, early childhood special education, 4K and kindergarten programming in Wisconsin. From the beginning, the Lead Agency and DPI have championed a unique collaboration across state agencies and related associations, along with early childhood educators, to promote a shared commitment to excellence in caring for and educating Wisconsin's young children and their families. The development of the WMELS was guided by research and supported by content experts from institutions of higher education in the state. The standards were created based on a comprehensive literature review and research on child development and teaching and learning practices from a variety of local and national early childhood leaders including: the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Head Start Child Outcomes, the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), standards developed by Wisconsin communities, and a review of Standards from other states. Additionally, the WMELS were established on a set of guiding principles that informed the development of the standards in Wisconsin. These guiding principles reflect the knowledge base in scientific research, our values, and commitment to young children and families.

- ii. Developmentally appropriate.

Through an extensive literature review, research on child development, and with the guidance of content experts, the WMELS Steering committee created guiding principles that informed the development of each domain. These principles include: all children are capable and competent, early relationships matter, a child's early learning and development is multidimensional, expectations for children must be guided by knowledge of child growth and development, children are individuals who develop at various rates, children are members of cultural groups that share developmental patterns, children exhibit a range of skills and competencies within any domain of development, children learn through play and active exploration of their environment, and lastly, parents are children's primary and most important caregivers and educators. The WMELS recognize that children are individuals who develop at individual rates. Developmental continuums of learning are included for each performance standard within each domain. The WMELS include a thoughtful teaching cycle framework encouraging educators to utilize the process to determine the most appropriate activities, materials, and experiences to plan for each child. An emphasis is placed on first gathering information to determine the current developmental level, interests, and background of a child, then planning what should be done to promote development, allowing the implementation of meaningful teaching and learning to support each child.

iii. Culturally and linguistically appropriate.

The WMELS acknowledge that children's development and learning opportunities should reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of children, families, and communities served. While children often develop in similar stages and sequences, diverse patterns of behavior and learning emerge as a result of the intersections of several factors, including genetic predisposition and physical characteristics, socio-economic status, and the values, beliefs, and cultural and political practices of their families and communities. The WMELS guide educators to pay close attention to how they intentionally design environments, provide materials, activities, and interactions that are supportive of culturally and linguistically diverse children and families. In the Approaches to Learning developmental domain, emphasis is placed on honoring that children learn within the context of their families and culture. A developmental continuum is provided to display how children will reflect their family, culture, and community when engaged in play and learning, notice that other children and families may do things differently, and understand and accept diversity in other children and families. Linguistically and culturally appropriate programming will ensure that each child's individual needs are addressed. Wisconsin's Early Learning Standards are available in Spanish and Hmong and can be accessed through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners website.

iv. Aligned with kindergarten entry.

In Wisconsin the WMELS are used to provide common language so that the adults caring for and educating children across settings have common understandings of development and expectations. The standards provide opportunity to unite early care and education programs with 4k and Kindergarten standards, while establishing the important role of early care and education in children's success later in school. The WMELS align with the Wisconsin Academic Standards in their comprehensive focus on developmentally appropriate expectations for children birth to first grade. The WMELS provide a foundation for the Wisconsin Academic Standards, which define expectations for children kindergarten through grade 12. Together they form a continuous set of common expectations for Wisconsin's children from birth through grade 12. School districts and communities can utilize these tools to define expectations from birth through preparation for college and work. Additional child development literature and research can be obtained through the Wisconsin Child Care Information Center:

(<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccic>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/ccic>. The DPI encourages special education teachers developing IEPs for children between three and six years of age to utilize and document the WMELS.

- v. Appropriate for all children from birth to kindergarten entry.

The knowledge and skills described in the WMELS are designed to provide support and information to families, caregivers, and educators concerning children's development within certain age spans, rather than dictate exactly when or how each child should progress. The WMELS are guidelines that reflect widely held expectations about what children should know and be able to do from birth to the beginning of first grade. The performance standards further outline how children may demonstrate that they meet expectations. The WMELS provide developmental expectations that are foundational to the Wisconsin Academic Standards for kindergarten through grade 12. Together they form a continuous set of common expectations for Wisconsin's children from birth through grade 12.

- vi. Implemented in consultation with the educational agency and the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body.

The WMELS represent a partnership of early childhood stakeholders on state, regional, and local levels. These collaborations mirror the vision of quality programming and the teamwork necessary to provide a comprehensive array of services to Wisconsin's young children and families. The WMELS Steering Committee, a group of stakeholders many of whom developed the WMELS, along with representation from the ECAC, come together to ensure that issues relevant to the WMELS are well represented and often considered at ECAC. The WMELS provide a resource for creating a common language across all settings and programs for young children and their families and provide validation of the critical nature of early development and the role that adults play to help children progress toward optimal development based upon their individual capacities and needs. The WMELS are used as a guide in creating a unifying vision for young children in Wisconsin, based upon the guiding principles.

(<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels>) <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels>.

- b. Describe how the required domains are included in the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines. Responses for "other" are optional.

- i. Cognition, including language arts and mathematics.

The WMELS include the developmental domain Cognition and General Knowledge. This domain includes three sub-domains: 1. Exploration, Discovery, and Problem Solving, 2. Mathematical Thinking, 3. Scientific Thinking. Each sub-domain includes developmental expectations describing what children should know and be able to do, along with performance standards and program standards. Within each sub-domain, a developmental continuum describes a sequence of skills a child may demonstrate, and strategies adults can use to support the child in moving along the continuum. This domain provides developmental expectations for children in Wisconsin to develop their capacity to use cognitive skills as a tool to acquire knowledge and skills such as reasoning, reflection, and interpretation. Children will understand and use early mathematical concepts, logical thinking processes, and scientific tools and skills to extend their learning. Language Development and Communication is another developmental domain included in the WMELS. It includes three sub-domains: 1. Listening and Understanding, 2. Speaking and Communicating, 3. Early Literacy. Each sub-domain includes developmental expectations describing what children should know and be able to do, along with performance standards and program standards. Within each sub-domain, a developmental continuum describes a sequence of skills a child may demonstrate, and strategies adults can use to support

the child in moving along the continuum. This domain refers to children’s developing ability to understand and convey meaning through language. Language development occurs in the context of relationships, encompassing all forms of communication and moves children along the continuum of early literacy. The developmental expectations for language and communication include conveying and interpreting meaning through listening and understanding, speaking and other forms of communicating, and having the literacy skills and concepts needed to become successful readers and writers.

ii. Social development.

Social development is included in the WMELS Social and Emotional Development domain, which is divided into three sub-domains: 1. Emotional Development, 2. Self-Concept, 3. Social Competence. Each sub-domain includes developmental expectations describing what children should know and be able to do, along with performance standards and program standards. Within each sub-domain, a developmental continuum describes a sequence of skills a child may demonstrate, and strategies adults can use to support the child in moving along the continuum. Wisconsin’s developmental expectation for social competence is that children will form and maintain secure relationships and gain understanding of social systems. Educators will provide opportunities for children to demonstrate attachment, trust and autonomy, engage in social interaction and play with others, demonstrate understanding of rules and social expectations, and engage in social problem-solving behavior.

iii. Emotional development.

Emotional development is included in the WMELS Social and Emotional Development domain, which is divided into three sub-domains: 1. Emotional Development, 2. Self-Concept, 3. Social Competence. Each sub-domain includes developmental expectations describing what children should know and be able to do, along with performance standards and program standards. Within each sub-domain, a developmental continuum describes a sequence of skills a child may demonstrate, and strategies adults can use to support the child in moving along the continuum. Emotional development specifically focuses on demonstrating emotional competence and self-regulation. Children will be given opportunities to express a wide range of emotions and understand and respond to others’ emotions.

iv. Physical development.

Physical development is addressed in the Health and Physical Development domain in the sub-domain Physical Health and Development. Motor Development and Sensory Organization are two additional sub-domains. Each sub-domain includes developmental expectations describing what children should know and be able to do, along with performance standards and program standards. Within each sub-domain, a developmental continuum describes a sequence of skills a child may demonstrate, and strategies adults can use to support the child in moving along the continuum. The developmental expectation is that children will be physically healthy and will be able to effectively care for their own physical needs. Children will be given opportunities to practice and demonstrate behaviors to meet self-help and physical needs such as sleep, dressing, toileting, and eating, along with meeting safety needs and a healthy lifestyle.

v. Approaches toward learning.

Approaches to Learning is one of the five developmental domains that organize the WMELS. The domain includes three sub-domains: 1. Curiosity, Engagement, and Persistence, 2. Creativity and Imagination, 3. Diversity in Learning. Each sub-domain includes developmental expectations describing what children should know and be able to do, along with performance standards and program standards. Within each sub-domain, a developmental continuum describes a sequence of skills a child may demonstrate, and strategies adults can use to support

the child in moving along the continuum. This domain is the one most subject to individual variation. It recognizes that children approach learning in different ways and emphasizes the development of positive attitudes and dispositions. It honors that children learn within the context of their family and culture. It is inclusive of a child's curiosity about the world and the importance that imagination and invention play in openness to new tasks and challenges. It stresses the importance of nurturing initiative, persistence and attentiveness in learning while encouraging reflection and interpretation. How we learn is addressed to be as important as what we learn.

- vi. Describe how other optional domains are included, if any:

N/A

- c. Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are updated and include the date first issued and/or the frequency of updates.

The WMELS were first issued in 2003, with updates in 2008, 2011, 2013, and 2017. The 2003 edition included standards for 3- to 5-year-olds. The 2008 edition added standards for the birth-to-3 age range and developmental continuums, sample behaviors of children, and sample strategies for adults. The 2011 edition added alignment of WMELS with Wisconsin Common Core State Standards and an updated resources section. The 2014 edition added the previously developed 2011 Literacy Update (printed separately), Revised WMELS Alignment with 2013 Common Core State Standards and Common Core Essential Elements, and an updated resource section. The 2017 edition updated resources and terminology, clarified the developmental continuum purpose, and the Wisconsin Common Core State Standards were renamed and updated with the Wisconsin Academic Standards. The original Standards were translated into Spanish and Hmong. A Spanish version of the Standards (2015) is available on the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners Web site: (<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels/order-wi-model-early-learning-standards>) <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels/order-wi-model-early-learning-standards>. DPI will lead a review of the standards in 2021.

- d. If applicable, discuss the state process for the adoption, implementation, and continued improvement of state out-of-school timestandards.

The Lead Agency incorporated school-age care programs into YoungStar in 2012, followed by day camp programs in 2014. The Lead Agency brought together stakeholders in school-age and day camp programming to determine common language, evaluate best practices in school-age and day camp care, and inform how these programs would be rated in YoungStar. The stakeholders represented the following groups: Wisconsin Afterschool Network (WAN), Wisconsin Afterschool Association, WFCCA, WCCAA, DPI, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, YWCAs, Wisconsin Extension Services, University of Wisconsin (UW) - Stevens Point, UW - Milwaukee, WECA, SFTA, Wisconsin Youth Company, City of Madison, Milwaukee Public Schools, and American Camp Association. The Lead Agency is an active participant in WAN where it supports professional development curriculum creation and review. WAN has created an Afterschool & Youth Development Credential (12 credits) as well as training around the School-Age Curricular Framework, Guiding Children's Behaviors in School-Age Programs, Trauma-Informed Care, and Designing Outcomes for School-Age Programs. Many of these professional development opportunities have been incorporated into YoungStar. The Lead Agency has participated in the National Center for After-School Enrichment Peer Learning Communities and provides additional technical assistance to other states that are working on incorporating out-of-school time programs into their quality rating and improvement systems.

e. Provide the Web link to the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines and if available, the school-age guidelines.

(<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels>)
<http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels>

6.4.2 How early learning and guidelines are used

CCDF funds cannot be used to develop or implement an assessment for children that:

- Will be the primary or sole basis to determine a child care provider ineligible to participate in the CCDF
- Will be used as the primary or sole basis to provide a reward or sanction for an individual provider
- Will be used as the primary or sole method for assessing program effectiveness
- Will be used to deny children eligibility to participate in the CCDF (658E(c)(2)(T)(ii)(I); 98.15(a)(2))

Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are used.

The WMELS are intended to be used as a resource for improving the quality of all early learning environments, to guide professional development activities and investment, and to inform educators and caregivers in their decisions regarding approaches to curriculum development across all early learning environments. A statewide system of 90+ trainers is available to provide WMELS training in every region of the state. The training designs are available for University and Technical College credit in both online and face-to-face delivery and are available in a non-credit 15-18-hour delivery format. The 15-18-hour training is intended to provide opportunities for participants to learn how to use the standards as a guide to determine developmentally appropriate curriculum, daily activities, assessment, and to design care and learning environments to support adult/child relationships that enhance optimal learning experiences for young children. Through the assessment process a child's early learning and development is observed through social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development and communication, health and physical development, and cognition and general knowledge. The training is available in Spanish and Hmong, and a WMELS training has been developed to be culturally responsive to tribes throughout Wisconsin.

6.4.3 Measurable Indicators for early learning and developmental guidelines

If quality funds are used to develop, maintain, or implement early learning and development guidelines, describe the measurable indicators that will be used to evaluate the state/territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services and the data on the extent to which the state/territory has met these measures (98.53(f)(3)).

Wisconsin takes a variety of approaches to supporting programs to implement the WMELS, including training, technical assistance, coaching, as well as ensuring all other initiatives align with WMELS. Each of these approaches includes opportunities to determine the effectiveness of the use of WMELS in improving the quality of child care programming, using quantitative data from surveys completed by QRIS participants, QRIS overall ratings along with indicator specific data, training participant evaluations, qualitative reports from coaching feedback, and community of practice provider implementation discussions. YoungStar contains an indicator and a high-

quality practice directly connected to the WMELS, as well as others that align with different aspects of the WMELS. The overall YoungStar participation data in November of 2019 was 3,707 programs with a slight increase in November of 2020 when 3,726 programs were participating. With increased participation in the QRIS, programs have access to a host of supports that work to increase their quality. YoungStar indicators most directly related to the early learning standards include the Developmentally Appropriate Environments (DAE) indicator. Demonstrating the requirements of the DAE indicator shows programs are taking beginning steps toward offering child care that is reflective of the WMELS. This indicator is required for all programs earning 3, 4, or 5 Star ratings. Programs are provided with a YoungStar Consultant to assist them in putting the indicator requirements into action. DAE consists of five items: providing developmentally appropriate interactions and promoting positive relationships, organizing the environment into interest centers or play areas with a minimum number of materials reflective of WMELS, specifically books, fine motors materials, art materials, blocks, dramatic play, nature/science, and math materials. The materials must be easily accessible and offer varied levels of difficulty. The daily schedule must include at least 50 consecutive minutes of uninterrupted free choice. Our QRIS data shows that of 56% of programs choosing to participate AND choosing to request a rating were able to demonstrate the requirements in 2019, with that number increasing to 64% in 2020. For those programs ready to implement at a deeper level and/or wanting to earn a 4- or 5-Star rating, the QRIS includes a high-quality practice, Curriculum Aligned with WMELS, recognizing programs for aligning their curriculum with the WMELS. To earn this high-quality practice, programs must create lesson plans with activities/experiences and goals that reflect the WMES five domains, offer learning materials, activities and/or experiences that support children in reaching their goals, and share information with families about the WMELS. In 2019, 17% of programs earned this practice with an increase to 19% in 2020. As mentioned, YoungStar provides programs with free consultation along with coaching opportunities. YoungStar utilizes the Practice Based Coaching model to provide free coaching to providers as part of their available YoungStar services. YoungStar has developed needs assessments specifically aligned with the WMELS to strengthen teaching practices within the ECE workforce. Additional support is provided through the many trainings made available by the statewide training network with both in-person and online options. Trainings include the 15-hour Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards training, 3-hour Learning Environments through the Lens of DAP (supporting the DAE indicator), 1-hour online self-paced DAE training, 3-hour WMELS Next Steps, and various domain specific trainings. While individual training agencies keep their own evaluation scores, each reports data incorporated in an annual statewide report providing information about the total number of trainings offered, number of participants and sector represented, and WMELS website usage. In 2019 there was a significant increase in the number of group child care staff who attended WMELS training, with the number of participants trained increasing from 383 in 2018 to 568 in 2019.

7 Support Continuous Quality Improvement

Lead Agencies are required to use a portion of their Child Care and Development Fund program expenditures for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care (98.53). The quality activities should be aligned with a statewide or territory-wide assessment of the state's or territory's need to carry out such services and care.

States and territories are required to report on these quality improvement investments through CCDF in three ways:

1. In the CCDF Plan, the ACF 118, states and territories will describe the types of activities supported by quality investments over the 3-year period (658G(b); 98.16(j)).
2. In the annual expenditure report, the ACF-696, ACF will collect data on how much CCDF funding is spent on quality activities. This report will be used to determine compliance with the required quality and infant and toddler spending requirements (658G(d)(1);

98.53(f)).

3. For each year of the Plan period, states and territories will submit a Quality Progress Report, the ACF 218, that will include a description of activities funded by quality expenditures and the measures used by the state/territory to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory (658G(d); 98.53(f)).

States and territories must fund efforts in at least one of the following 10 activities:

- Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce (Addressed in Section 6)
- Improving on the development or implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines (Addressed in Section 6)
- Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system or other systems of quality improvement for child care providers and services
- Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers
- Establishing or expanding a statewide system of child care resource and referral services
- Supporting compliance with state/territory requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety (as described in section 5)
- Evaluating the quality of child care programs in the state/territory, including evaluating how programs positively impact children
- Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- Performing other activities to improve the quality of child care services, as long as outcome measures relating to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry are possible

Throughout this Plan, states and territories will describe the types of quality improvement activities where CCDF investments are being made, including but not limited to, quality set-aside funds, and will describe the measurable indicators of progress used to evaluate state/territory progress in improving the quality of child care services for each expenditure (98.53(f)). These activities can benefit infants and toddlers through school-age populations, and all categories of care. It is important that while Lead Agencies have the flexibility to define “high quality” and develop strategies and standards to support their definition, Lead Agencies should consider how that definition and those strategies for different provider types reflect and acknowledge their unique differences and how quality varies in different settings, including family child care and small care settings as well as child care centers.

This section covers the quality activities needs assessment, quality improvement activities, and indicators of progress for each of the activities undertaken in the state or territory.

7.1 Quality Activities Needs Assessment for Child Care Services

7.1.1 Assessment process and frequency of assessment

Lead Agencies must invest in quality activities based on an assessment of the state/territory's needs to carry out those activities. Lead Agencies have the flexibility to design an assessment of their quality activities that best meet their needs, including how often they do the assessment. Describe your state/territory assessment process, including the frequency of assessment (658G(a)(1); 98.53(a)).

The Lead Agency uses a variety of strategies to assess which quality improvement services are most needed in our state. In 2020, the Preschool Development Grant funded a comprehensive Needs Assessment and development of the B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan. This plan consists of four main strategic goals supporting Workforce, Access, Affordability, and Quality, within the overarching purpose of promoting and advancing equity and inclusion in early care and education. Implementation of this Strategic Plan will be evaluated externally, along with routine data analysis performed by the Lead Agency as follows... Monthly data analysis is performed to assess: Composition of the ECE Workforce- The Lead Agency analyzes the credentials, wages, race, and ethnicity of the individuals in the ECE workforce. It also funds workforce studies to draw information around who is working in the ECE field and what their needs are. Finally, the Lead Agency participates in meetings with stakeholders - including ECE associations - to solicit recommendations/feedback and identify strategies to support the workforce in meaningful ways. Results of these analyses most often lead to decisions around how to fund compensation and professional development supports. In addition to the Lead Agency's efforts, individual CCR&Rs complete annual stakeholder surveys to identify training, technical assistance, and resources needed at the local level. This information informs the development of future contract components. ECE programs are also invited to submit anonymous evaluations of technical consultation, formal rating and/or training received through the services the Lead Agency funds. Evaluations inform the need for adjustments to current administrative delivery practices. Accessibility of care- The Lead Agency analyzes how many providers are regulated, by region, by program type, and by star rating level. Results of this analysis lead to decisions in how to fund ECE provider recruitment and retention strategies. Affordability of care- The Lead Agency analyzes where children from families receiving child care subsidies attend, by region, and by star level. An annual market rate analysis is completed by the Lead Agency in addition to monthly analyses. The Lead Agency also contracts with SFTA and CCR&R agencies to provide quarterly information around what they are hearing from families regarding affordability. Results of these analyses lead to decisions around how to use quality ratings to fund bonus payments for providers and families. Quality of care - The Lead Agency analyzes star ratings and quality indicator measures, across time, by provider type and region. It also utilizes research partners, stakeholder group feedback, and results from the QRIS validation study to determine best practices in quality care. Results of these analyses lead to decisions around how to fund professional development supports, and which topics to include.

7.1.2 Assessment findings and identified quality improvement goals

Describe the findings of the assessment and if any overarching goals for quality improvement were identified. If applicable, include a direct URL/website link for any available evaluation or research related to the findings.

The Lead Agency partnered with the University of Wisconsin School of Social Work and Institute for Research on Poverty to complete a formal assessment of one of its largest quality initiatives, YoungStar. The Wisconsin Early Child Care Study (WECCS) examined whether YoungStar's rating scale was able to differentiate programs according to their levels of independently observed quality, and whether children who attend more highly rated programs gained more in terms of school readiness over the course of a school year than children attending programs rated at lower levels. The executive summary and full report are available at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/media>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/media>. Findings from the validation study were released in 2015 and 2016. Results showed that YoungStar program rating levels did predict observed classroom quality at both the star and indicator levels. The results were statistically significant. However, the data did not find that children in 3 Star or higher YoungStar programs were

demonstrating greater gains than children who were attending 2 Star programs. Children in programs at all levels of rating were demonstrating similar levels of school readiness across multiple early academic and behavioral outcomes. Based on these results, the Lead Agency established the YoungStar Refinement Advisory Committee in 2016. This committee included professionals from Licensed Group, Family, and Accredited Child Care programs. The committee also included individuals from the Wisconsin Child Care Administrator’s Association, Wisconsin Family Child Care Association, Wisconsin Afterschool Network, United Migrant Opportunity Services, the Milwaukee Succeeds initiative, Wisconsin Technical College System, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association, Black Child Development Institute, Supporting Families Together Association, Kids Forward, United Neighborhood Centers of Milwaukee, and two State Representatives. The YoungStar Refinement Advisory Committee reviewed the key outcomes from the validation study and supported the following recommendations that were implemented in January 2019: 1) YoungStar refined its 3 Star educational threshold for Lead Teachers and Family Child Care providers. This change reduced cost and other structural barriers to higher education completion and supported family child care programs and women of color in reaching increased levels of quality. 2) YoungStar added a requirement that providers must have developmentally appropriate materials, interactions, and opportunities to explore in order to reach a 3 Star rating or higher. 3) YoungStar simplified the rating criteria language for Family Engagement. YoungStar implemented the final recommendation from the advisory group in January 2021. This modification simplified the rating criteria, removing some high-quality practices to increase focus on the items that were most aligned with positive child outcomes. Wisconsin was selected as a model in using its QRIS validation study results to meaningfully consider and implement changes to the program. Read more at (https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CCEEPRA_QRISValidation_ChildTrends_December2017.pdf) https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CCEEPRA_QRISValidation_ChildTrends_December2017.pdf.(https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CCEEPRA_QRISValidation_ChildTrends_December2017.pdf) https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CCEEPRA_QRISValidation_ChildTrends_December2017.pdf. Further exploration and revision of YoungStar is needed based on the 2020-2021 needs assessment finding that quality early care and education exists in Wisconsin, but families may not be able to access or afford it. Families and communities also have varying definitions of quality. Early care and education professionals and stakeholders expressed a need to systemically address equity, inclusion, trauma, mental health, social and emotional learning, family engagement and other best practices to support quality ECE programs. In interviews with caregivers and providers from historically underserved communities, Black, Latinx and Hmong caregivers reported that they wanted to see more diverse providers and more representation of culture and identity, including language, in programs. Many Listening Session participants mentioned how YoungStar does not measure all definitions of quality. Additional data from the Needs Assessment is available at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/pdg/sandbox>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/childcare/pdg/sandbox>. To address these identified needs, the B-5 Statewide Strategic Plan includes Goal 4 to pursue high-quality early care and education that is responsive to all families’ needs.

7.2 Use of Quality Funds

7.2.1 Quality improvement activities

a. Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce as discussed in 6.2 (Related Section: 6.3). Check all that apply.

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

Preschool Development Grant- funded additional higher education scholarships, ECE shared services networks, and social-emotional development TTA.

b. Developing, maintaining, or implementing early learning and developmental guidelines (Related Section: 6.4). Check all that apply.

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

Preschool Development Grant- funded a crosswalk assessment between Wisconsin's Model Early Learning Standards and the WIDA Early English Language Development Standards.

c. Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system (Related Section: 7.3). Check all that apply.

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

N/A

d. Improving the supply and quality of child care services for infants and toddlers (Related Section: 7.4). Check all that apply.

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

Pritzker Foundation- funded the Wisconsin Infant-Toddler Policy Project, which has the goal of improving the supply of quality infant and toddler ECE services.

e. Establishing or expanding a statewide system of CCR&R services, as discussed in 1.7 (Related Section: 7.5). Check all that apply.

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

N/A

f. Facilitating Compliance with State Standards (Related Section: 7.6). Check all that apply.

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

N/A

g. Evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care services within the

state/territory (Related Section: 7.7). Check all that apply.

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

Preschool Development Grant- funded the needs assessment

h. Accreditation Support (Related Section: 7.8). Check all that apply.

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

N/A

i. Supporting state/territory or local efforts to develop high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development (Related Section: 7.9). Check all that apply.

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

N/A

j. Other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of child care services and which measurement of outcomes related to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry is possible (Related Section: 7.10). Check all that apply

i. CCDF funds

ii. State general funds

Other funds: describe

Preschool Development Grant- funded the needs assessment

7.3 Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) or Another System of Quality Improvement

Lead Agencies may respond in this section based on other systems of quality improvement, even if not called a QRIS, as long as the other quality improvement system contains the elements of a QRIS. QRIS refers to a systematic framework for evaluating, improving, and communicating the level of quality in early childhood programs and contains five key elements:

1. Program standards
2. Supports to programs to improve quality
3. Financial incentives and supports
4. Quality assurance and monitoring
5. Outreach and consumer education

7.3.1 QRIS or another system of quality improvement

Does your state/territory have a quality rating and improvement system or another system of quality improvement?

a. No, the state/territory has no plans for QRIS development. If no, skip to 7.4.1.

b. No, but the state/territory is in the QRIS development phase. If no, skip to 7.4.1.

c. Yes, the state/territory has a QRIS operating statewide or territory-wide. Describe how the QRIS is administered (e.g., statewide or locally or through CCR&R entities) and any partners, and provide a link, if available.

YoungStar is the QRIS for the State of Wisconsin. The Lead Agency has established a contract with SFTA to administer YoungStar, providing for onsite technical consultation, formal rating observations, and training. The Lead Agency is responsible for oversight of YoungStar service delivery, including policy development, performance monitoring, and automated system implementation. YoungStar participation is required for all providers accepting Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy program payments. As of December 2020, YoungStar had 3,718 participating programs (about 82% of all regulated programs). Wisconsin's providers have increased the quality of care they provide since the implementation of YoungStar. Currently, 68% of all children in the Wisconsin Shares program are attending high quality programs (3-5 Star rated). The Lead Agency also contracts with SFTA for CCR&R services. Wisconsin has nine CCR&R agencies that provide services throughout the state. Annual grants are based on the number of counties and county population served. Funding for the CCR&R agencies allows some flexibility to meet the particular identified needs of local populations including tribes, migrants, rural/urban families, and families with infants/toddlers. (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar>

d. Yes, the state/territory has a QRIS initiative operating as a pilot-test in a few localities or only a few levels but does not have a fully operating initiative on a statewide or territory-wide basis. Provide a link, if available.

N/A

e. Yes, the state/territory has another system of quality improvement. Describe the other system of quality improvement and provide a link, if available. **N/A**

7.3.2 QRIS or another system of quality improvement participation

Indicate how providers participate in the state or territory's QRIS or another system of quality improvement.

a. Are providers required to participate in the QRIS or another system of quality improvement? Check all that apply if response differs for different categories of care.

i. Participation is voluntary.

ii. Participation is partially mandatory. For example, participation is mandatory for providers serving children receiving a subsidy, participation is mandatory for all licensed providers or participation is mandatory for programs serving children birth to age 5 receiving a subsidy. If checked, describe the relationship between QRIS participation and subsidy (e.g., minimum rating required, reimbursed at higher rates for achieving higher ratings, participation at any level).

YoungStar participation is required for all providers accepting Wisconsin Shares child care subsidy authorizations. For all other providers, participation in YoungStar is voluntary. Any Wisconsin child care provider who serves children from birth to school-age can apply to participate, as long as they are in good standing with state regulations. Programs that have their licenses or certifications revoked, denied, or suspended will receive a 1 Star rating in YoungStar. Families are not eligible for Wisconsin Shares subsidy benefit load if they attend a 1 Star rated program. Wisconsin Shares subsidy amounts are impacted by the child care provider's YoungStar rating.

iii. Participation is required for all providers.

b. Which types of settings or distinctive approaches to early childhood education and care participate in the state/territory's QRIS or another system of quality improvement? Check all that apply.

i. Licensed child care centers

ii. Licensed family child care homes

iii. License-exempt providers

iv. Early Head Start programs

v. Head Start programs

vi. State Prekindergarten or preschool programs

vii. Local district-supported Prekindergarten programs

viii. Programs serving infants and toddlers

ix. Programs serving school-age children

x. Faith-based settings

xi. Tribally operated programs

xiv. Other. Describe:

N/A

c. Describe how the Lead Agency's QRIS, or other system for improving quality, considers how quality may look different in the different types of provider settings which participate in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement. For instance, does the system of quality improvement consider what quality looks like in a family child care home with mixed-age groups vs. child care centers with separate age groups? Or are standards related to quality environments flexible enough to define quality in home-based environments, as well as child care center environments?

The Lead Agency's QRIS, YoungStar was created to include four different rating tracks to ensure that programs are evaluated based on their unique program qualities. The four rating tracks- family, group, school-age, and short-term operational- were created separately with input from providers, provider advocacy groups, and other stakeholders. Although each rating track includes evaluation standards in the same four standards of evaluation- lead staff education, learning environment & curriculum, business practices, and health & wellness- the actual indicators within each standard differ across tracks. For example, Wisconsin has used the ERS-3 tools as the basis for standards in the learning environment category. The FCCERS-3 is the foundation of the learning environment standards in the family rating track, the ITERS-3 is the foundation of the learning environment standards for infant/toddler classrooms in the group track, the ECERS-3 is the foundation for preschool classrooms in the group track, and the SACERS-U is the foundation for school-age programs. Wisconsin used the PAS, BAS, and model work standards tools to differentiate business practice standards for family and group programs. Finally, Wisconsin includes different levels of lead staff education requirements based on track, noting that family child care providers are more likely to face barriers to higher education and that school-age care programs most often use part-time employees, with lower levels of education completed, in their programs. Standards within tracks are also flexible enough to address unique program characteristics and ages of children enrolled. For example, we do not require certain assessment or curriculum tools, we just evaluate programs based on how they use their own curriculums to reach children's development in a variety of domains. We also stratify certain standards based on age group served. For example, infant/toddler classrooms have different requirements for play areas than preschool classrooms. Despite having four unique tracks since YoungStar inception, we participate in a continuous quality improvement process wherein we regularly survey stakeholders and providers, follow current research, and participate in external evaluations to regularly update our standards across tracks to continually improve our system of evaluation.

7.3.3 Identify how the state or territory supports and assesses the quality of child care providers.

The Lead Agency may invest in the development, implementation, or enhancement of a tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care providers and services or another system of quality improvement. Note: If a Lead Agency decides to invest CCDF quality dollars in a QRIS, that agency can use the funding to assist in meeting consumer education requirements (98.33).

Do the state/territory's quality improvement standards align with or have reciprocity with any of the following standards?

No

Yes. If yes, check the type of alignment, if any, between the state/territory's quality standards and other standards. Check all that apply.

a. Programs that meet state/territory PreK standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, there is a reciprocal agreement between PreK programs and the quality improvement system).

b. Programs that meet federal Head Start Program Performance Standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is

the same, there is a reciprocal agreement between Head Start programs and the quality improvement system).

c. Programs that meet national accreditation standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, an alternative pathway exists to meeting the standards).

d. Programs that meet all or part of state/territory school-age quality standards.

e. Other. Describe:

N/A

7.3.4 Link between quality standards and licensing requirements

Do the state/territory’s quality standards build on its licensing requirements and other regulatory requirements?

No

Yes. If yes, check any links between the state/territory’s quality standards and licensing requirements.

a. Requires that a provider meet basic licensing requirements to qualify for the base level of the QRIS.

b. Embeds licensing into the QRIS.

c. State/territory license is a “rated” license.

d. Other. Describe:

N/A

7.3.5 Financial or other incentives through QRIS or another quality improvement system

Does the state/territory provide financial incentives and other supports designed to expand the full diversity of child care options and help child care providers improve the quality of services that are provided through the QRIS or another system of quality improvement.

No

Yes. If yes, check all that apply.

a. If yes, indicate in the table below which categories of care receive this support.

| Financial incentive or other supports | Licensed center-based | License exempt center-based | Licensed family child care home | License-exempt family child care home | In-home (care in the child’s own home) |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| i. One-time grants, awards, or bonuses | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Financial incentive or other supports | Licensed center-based | License exempt center-based | Licensed family child care home | License-exempt family child care home | In-home (care in the child's own home) |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| ii. Ongoing or periodic quality stipends | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| iii. Higher subsidy payments | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| iv. Training or technical assistance related to QRIS | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| v. Coaching/mentoring | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| vi. Scholarships, bonuses, or increased compensation for degrees/certificates | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| vii. Materials and supplies | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| viii. Priority access for other grants or programs | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| ix. Tax credits for providers | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| x. Tax credits for parents | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |
| xi. Payment of fees (e.g., licensing, accreditation) | [x] | [x] | [x] | [x] | [] |

b. Other:

N/A

7.3.6 Measurable indicators of progress relevant to Subsection 7.3

Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.3 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care

programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency tracks several measures to evaluate the improvement in quality of child care programs and services: provider number at star level by region, track, and regulation category; providers fully engaged in quality improvement (participating actively); services taken by providers (technical assistance, ratings, micro-grants, professional development); children in the subsidy program by star level; providers with specific trainings that are of interest to the Lead Agency; trainings provided and taken by providers across the state; evaluations of trainings; evaluation of consultation services provided through YoungStar; technical assistance provided to families through CCR&R agencies or FRCs; referral services provided to families through CCR&R agencies; monitoring issues of high-quality programs (serious violations); anecdotal information about the supply and demand of child care in the region. The Lead Agency measures the technical assistance services given to child care programs by the CCR&R agencies across the state/region assessing key needs, strengths, and attainment of quality improvement goals. The Lead Agency generates data reports that analyze program improvement over time for the state/regions in specific quality indicators of the QRIS, such as developmentally appropriate environments or high-quality practices. The Lead Agency sets service delivery goals/standards and runs quarterly reports to make sure that the goals have been met.

7.4 Improving the Supply and Quality of Child Care Programs and Services for Infants and Toddlers

Lead Agencies are required to spend 3 percent of their total CCDF expenditures on activities to improve the supply and quality of their infant and toddler care. This is in addition to the general quality set-aside requirement.

Lead Agencies are encouraged to use the required needs assessment to systematically review and improve the overall quality of care that infants and toddlers receive, the systems in place or needed to support and enhance the quality of infant and toddler providers, the capacity of the infant and toddler workforce to meet the unique needs of very young children, and the methods in place to increase the proportion of infants and toddlers in higher quality care, including any partnerships or coordination with Early Head Start and IDEA Part C programs.

7.4.1 Activities to improve supply and quality of infant and toddler care

Identify and describe the activities that are being implemented by the state/territory to improve the supply (see also section 4) and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers and check which of the activities are available to each provider type.

a. Establishing or expanding high-quality community- or neighborhood-based family and child development centers. These centers can serve as resources to child care providers to improve the quality of early childhood services for infants and toddlers from low- income families and to improve eligible child care providers' capacity to offer high-quality, age-appropriate care to infants and toddlers from low-income families.

The Lead Agency will explore additional opportunities to support EHS-CCP.

Licensed center-based

License exempt center-based

Licensed family child care home

License-exempt family child care home

In-home care (care in the child's own home)

b. Establishing or expanding the operation of community-based, neighborhood-based, or provider networks comprised of home-based providers, or small centers focused on expanding the supply of infant and toddler care.

The Lead Agency has funded Shared Services Networks and will continue to utilize available funding sources to fund additional Shared Services Networks across the state.

Licensed center-based

License exempt center-based

Licensed family child care home

License-exempt family child care home

In-home care (care in the child's own home)

c. Providing training and professional development to enhance child care providers' ability to provide developmentally appropriate services for infants and toddlers.

The Lead Agency contracts with WECA to administer the T.E.A.C.H. Scholarship Program. Scholarship support to complete Infant Toddler Credential courses is available to child care teachers, administrators and family child care providers who work in regulated child care programs. The Lead Agency contracts with WI-AIMH to offer the Infant-Toddler Pyramid Model training series statewide. The Lead Agency contracts with SFTA and the CCR&R network to deliver TTA and Practice Based Coaching around high-quality practices for infant toddler classrooms. Through YoungStar, providers receive an annual average of ten hours of free, onsite technical assistance to be used to support activities that improve the quality of their program. Many providers specifically request technical assistance around caring for infants and toddlers. YoungStar staff may provide assistance with room arrangement, curriculum, daily activity planning, ideas for staff professional development, developmentally appropriate practices for young children, as well as many other assistance options. The Lead Agency also contracts with CCR&R agencies to complete trainings through a cohort model focusing on infant and toddler care.

Licensed center-based

License exempt center-based

Licensed family child care home

License-exempt family child care home

In-home care (care in the child's own home)

d. Providing coaching, mentoring, and/or technical assistance on this age group's unique needs from statewide or territory-wide networks of qualified infant/toddler specialists.

The Lead Agency actively participates in the Region V infant toddler community of practice with technical assistance provided by the Child Care State Capacity Building Center. This opportunity provides a wealth of resource information and lessons learned from other states' implementation strategies. This opportunity has created collaborative relationships across the states within the region. The Lead Agency works with the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (WI-AIMH) to support implementation of the Wisconsin Pyramid Model training content and is a member of the state leadership team. The Lead Agency worked with Region V OHS staff to implement Practice Based Coaching (PBC) into onsite YoungStar consultation as well as into Pyramid Model external coaching services.

Licensed center-based

- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

e. Coordinating with early intervention specialists who provide services for infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.).

The Lead Agency partnered with early intervention specialists and special education service providers to develop the YoungStar Early Childhood Inclusion (ECI) webpage. The information contained within the ECI webpage continues to be updated in order to provide parents and providers with the most current information and best practices for identifying, screening, referring, and supporting infants and toddlers with special needs. The collaboration between the Lead Agency, early intervention specialists, and special education providers has also led to the provision of joint trainings, conference presentations, and the development of information materials.

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

f. Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's QRIS, including classroom inventories and assessments.

The Lead Agency continues to strengthen its YoungStar QRIS criteria by requiring that several high-quality practices must be met for all age groups served within a program, including infants and toddlers. High-quality practices that must be observed for infants and toddlers (if served in the program) include: completing developmental screenings, assessing children based on developmentally appropriate expectations, setting developmentally appropriate goals for growth across domains, creating and updating portfolios highlighting child growth, and creating developmentally appropriate environments that include high-quality interactions, age-appropriate materials, and age-appropriate opportunities to play. In addition, the Lead Agency requires infant/toddler classrooms to be observed by an ERS (Environment Rating Scale) Observer using the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, 3rd edition (ITERS-3) if they want to reach a 4- or 5-Star rating. Additional focus is being placed on the early learning environment, with a targeted focus of onsite technical assistance around early learning experiences. The Lead Agency provided early learning environment kits for infant and toddler classrooms to provide hands-on materials that support increased understanding of developmentally appropriate interactions and experiences.

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

g. Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's child care licensing regulations.

N/A

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

[x] h. Developing infant and toddler components within the early learning and developmental guidelines.

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) include the birth- to three-year-old age range, as well as developmental continuums, sample behaviors of children, and sample strategies for adults working with this age group.

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

[x] i. Improving the ability of parents to access transparent and easy-to-understand consumer information about high-quality infant and toddler care that includes information on infant and toddler language, social-emotional, and both early literacy and numeracy cognitive development.

The Lead Agency has revised and updated the YoungStar website to improve the parent and provider resource sections of the site. The improvements provide a more in-depth array of resources available to parents and providers. The website includes resources specifically for working with infants and toddlers.

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

[x] j. Carrying out other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of infant and toddler care provided within the state/territory and for which there is evidence that the activities will lead to improved infant and toddler health and safety, cognitive and physical development, and/or well-being.

The Lead Agency has funded more than 2,500 infant/toddler environment kits to support and assist ECE programs in providing developmentally appropriate materials and activities to meet the unique needs of infants and toddlers (birth through 36 months). The kits come with technical assistance and professional development around their contents, focused on the requirements found in the developmentally appropriate environments (DAE) YoungStar evaluation criteria indicator that is required for all 3, 4, and 5 Star ratings.

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

k. Coordinating with child care health consultants.

The Lead Agency is exploring ongoing work with health care consultation for licensing specialists and providers.

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

l. Coordinating with mental health consultants.

As part of the ECAC recommendation, the Lead Agency is further developing WI's infant and early childhood mental health consultation model.

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

m. Establishing systems to collect real time data on available (vacant) slots in ECE settings, by age of child, quality level, and location of program.

The Wisconsin Infant and Toddler Policy Project funded by the Pritzker Children's Initiative has a goal statement focused on pursuing many strategies to increase the supply of infant and toddler slots. It aims to influence policy so that every low-income family with an infant and/or toddler will have equitable access to a range of affordable, high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive child care options that meet their family and employment needs. The Preschool Development Grant also awards additional points in its Community Innovation and Workforce Grant competitions for focusing on infants and toddlers. Furthermore, CCDBG CARES Act and CRRSA funds provide additional incentives and support for providers caring for infants and toddlers.

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

n. Other.

N/A

- Licensed center-based
- License exempt center-based
- Licensed family child care home
- License-exempt family child care home
- In-home care (care in the child's own home)

7.4.2 Measurable indicators of progress relevant to Subsection 7.4

Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.4 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency will measure the percentage of infants and toddlers receiving Wisconsin Shares funding who are in high-quality care. The Lead Agency will also measure the number of providers who attend training and those who complete the Infant Toddler Credential. The Lead Agency developed an infant/toddler feature that serves two purposes. It can be used to filter data elements so that all the quality indicators can be analyzed for just infant/toddler care. In addition, the infant/toddler feature information is exported to Child Care Finder, the public search site, so that families can search for infant/toddler care/openings in their communities with specific quality levels.

7.5 Child Care Resource and Referral

A Lead Agency may expend funds to establish, expand, or maintain a statewide system of child care resource and referral services (98.53(a)(5)). It can be coordinated, to the extent determined appropriate by the Lead Agency, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based, or regionally based lead child care resource and referral organization (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii)). This effort may include activities done by local or regional child care and resource referral agencies, as discussed in section 1.7.

7.5.1 Child care resource and referral agencies' services

What are the services provided by the local or regional child care and resource and referral agencies?

The Lead Agency contracts with SFTA, a statewide member association for Wisconsin's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Agencies and Family Resource Centers, to implement a variety of early childhood programming and initiatives at a regional level. The CCR&Rs in Wisconsin contract with SFTA to implement the Lead Agency's QRIS program, YoungStar, which includes consultation, coaching, and rating. CCR&R agencies assist programs in preparing for regulation through their pre-licensing technical assistance. The CCR&Rs house a network of state trainers who provide early childhood and school-age care training. The Lead Agency contracts with each CCR&R to provide four core services throughout each service delivery area, including to tribal communities: 1. Referrals to families to help them make informed decisions about child care and school-age care services. 2. Technical assistance to families on child development, developmental screening and choosing child care. 3. Recruitment of child care and school-age care providers, both regulated and unregulated, to access high-quality training and technical assistance opportunities to ensure families have access to high-quality care. 4. To be visible partners within their communities, partnering with stakeholders and community leaders and acting as liaisons between families, providers, and other community stakeholders.

7.5.2 Measurable indicators of progress relevant to Subsection 7.5

Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.5 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the

state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency will evaluate the quality and effectiveness of these services in a variety of ways. Information will be collected and analyzed related to each of the four main resource and referral services: high-quality child care referral services for families across the state; referrals to other support services specific to the needs of each family being supported; resources and information to individual families around topics like child development, developmentally appropriate child behavior, expectations, guidance, and developmental screening; and training and customized support to early education providers around high-quality care practices. The Lead Agency will also evaluate consumer satisfaction with CCR&R services, as well as each agency's progress in forming and maintaining strong local partnerships and community visibility. Finally, the Lead Agency will monitor progress in: recruitment of qualified, regulated early education providers, especially in areas of the state where the child care capacity does not meet the child care need; movement of child care programs into the QRIS; each agency's ability to gather valid market rate survey information; progress towards increasing the number of early education programs that are trained in inclusive practices, are expanding capacity for infant care, or are providing care during non-traditional hours (weekend, overnight).

7.6 Facilitating Compliance with State Standards

7.6.1 Activities to facilitate provider compliance with health and safety requirements

What activities does your state/territory fund with CCDF quality funds to facilitate child care providers' compliance with state/territory health and safety requirements? These requirements may be related to inspections, monitoring, training, compliance with health and safety standards, and with state/territory licensing standards as outlined in Section 5. Describe:

The Lead Agency utilizes quality funds for pre-licensing training through the CCR&R network to assist new providers in meeting regulation requirements.

7.6.2 Financial assistance to support complying with minimum health and safety requirements

Does the state/territory provide financial assistance to support child care providers in complying with minimum health and safety requirements?

No

Yes. If yes, which types of providers can access this financial assistance?

a. Licensed CCDF providers

b. Licensed non-CCDF providers

c. License-exempt CCDF providers

d. Other. Describe:

N/A

7.6.3 Measurable indicators of progress relevant to Subsection 7.6

Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.6 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures

The Lead Agency monitors the initial YoungStar rating of providers who are newly regulated and the

percentage of individuals who request pre-licensing technical assistance.

7.7 Evaluating and Assessing the Quality and Effectiveness of Child Care Programs and Services

7.7.1 Measures of quality and effectiveness of child care programs

Does the state/territory measure the quality and effectiveness of child care programs and services in both child care centers and family child care homes?

No

Yes. If yes, describe any tools used to measure child, family, teacher, classroom, or provider improvements, and how the state/territory evaluates how those tools positively impact children.

The Lead Agency uses several measures within its QRIS to evaluate the quality of, and level of improvement in, group, family, and school-age care programs. Programs can choose to simply participate in YoungStar and not be evaluated on the measures of quality used within YoungStar's rating scale. These programs are awarded a 2 Star Automated rating. Programs that choose to be rated on the 5 Star scale are evaluated on the YoungStar Evaluation Criteria created by the Lead Agency. The Evaluation Criteria include evidence-based, high-quality practices that extend beyond base regulation requirements in four areas: Education of Lead Staff; Learning Environment and Curriculum; Business and Professional Practices; and Health and Well-Being. Lead Staff Education is verified through The Registry, a non-profit agency that holds a contract with the Lead Agency. Registry data is sent automatically to the Lead Agency's rating verification case management system. All other requirements within the YoungStar Evaluation Criteria are evaluated by the program's assigned Technical Consultant. Programs that choose to attempt a 4- or 5-Star rating are also assessed by their Technical Consultant on seven additional high-quality practices that were chosen by the Lead Agency because of their strong connection to improved child outcomes. These seven practices are: Curriculum Aligned with Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards/School-Age Curricular Framework; Individual Child Portfolios; Intentional Planning to Improve Individual Child Outcomes; Developmental Screening, Tracking Child Outcomes; Social Emotional or Inclusion for Children with Special Needs Training; and Strengthening Families Through Early Care and Education with Mandated Reporter Training. Finally, these programs are observed using one or more Environment Rating Scales (ERS). An ERS Observer works with programs to set up and complete ERS observations for the required classrooms. YoungStar uses valid and reliable raters who use the Environment Rating Scale, Third Edition, Tools (FCCERS-3, ECERS-3, ITERS-3, SACERS-U). The Lead Agency analyzes program ratings monthly at the indicator and overall level. Rating change over time is measured and analyzed as well. The Lead Agency completed a Validation Study which looked at YoungStar's rating validity and associations with child outcomes and enhanced its QRIS to intentionally highlight those items that were associated with improved child outcomes. The Lead Agency intends to complete another Validation Study in the next few years, should funding be available. YoungStar also collects information and completes specialized consultation and evaluation on other program quality elements that are not assessed within the rating criteria. Information is collected and displayed to families to identify providers that: offer Head Start programming, offer 4K programming, offer infant/toddler programming, offer care

on weekends, offer care overnight, and offer programming in a language other than English. In the near future, programs will have the ability to be assessed on, and receive recognition for, specialized program knowledge and quality program implementation standards in the areas of inclusion for children with disabilities and social-emotional programming.

7.7.2 Measurable indicators of progress relevant to Subsection 7.7

Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.7 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in child care centers and family child care homes within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency regularly analyzes program ratings at the indicator and overall level. Using this data, rating and indicator attainment change over time is measured and analyzed as well. The percent of children in high-quality care (3 Star or higher) and the number of programs rated as high-quality (3 Star or higher) are captured monthly and reported on the DCF public website at (<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/impact>) <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/impact> . The Lead Agency measures the percentage of low-income children from high-needs populations (children from families experiencing homelessness, children in foster care, children of teen parents, and children with disabilities) who attend high-quality programs. The number of programs that receive onsite technical assistance, training, and/or micro-grants to improve quality is measured by the Lead Agency on a regular basis. The Lead Agency reviews the analytics reports from the ERS scoring tools. The reports provide comparisons and changes in classroom ERS scores over time, both at the individual item score level and at the average program score level. The reports can also show assessor reliability and reliability percentage for visits and number of visits conducted. The Lead Agency increased its goal around the percentage of programs rated as high quality from 49% to 52% in January 2018. The Lead Agency has met or exceeded the 52% goal since September 2016. At the beginning of CY2021, Wisconsin met this indicator with 56.7% of programs rated 3 Star or higher. In January 2020, the Lead Agency also set a goal that at least 67% of low-income children will attend high-quality programs. At the beginning of CY2021, Wisconsin met this indicator with 67.8% of children authorized to programs rated 3 Star or higher.

7.8 Accreditation Support

7.8.1 Pursuit of Accreditation

Does the state/territory support child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of high quality?

a. Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide for both child care centers and family child care homes. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to child care centers and family child care homes to achieve accreditation. Is accreditation available for programs serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children?

The following accreditations are equivalent to a YoungStar 5 Star rating: National Association for the Education of Young Children, Association for Early Learning Leaders'

National Accreditation Commission, City of Madison Group and School-Age Accreditation. The following accreditations are equivalent to a YoungStar 4 Star or 5 Star rating: National Early Childhood Program Accreditation, Cognia - NCA/SACS/NWAC (formerly AdvancED), American Montessori Society, Council on Accreditation, National Association for Family Child Care, Satellite Family Child Care Accreditation (in the greater Madison area), and American Camp Association. If a program is accredited by one of those agencies and the program meets the educational requirements of a 4 Star program in their respective YoungStar rating track, that program would be eligible for 4 Stars. If a program meets the educational level of a 5 Star program in their respective YoungStar rating track, they would be eligible for 5 Stars.

The Lead Agency contracts with SFTA to offer technical assistance and micro-grant services to programs pursuing accreditation. Technical Consultants provide support, advice, and resources to assist providers in reaching their quality improvement goals to meet accreditation standards. The Lead Agency subcontracts with the Wisconsin Family Child Care Association (WFCCA) to provide additional training and technical assistance to family child care programs pursuing accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), a YoungStar approved accrediting body. WFCCA regional representatives are available throughout the state to provide guidance and support. Trainings on how to achieve NAFCC accreditation are held throughout the year and are presented at the WFCCA state conference. Scholarship funds are available to supplement NAFCC accreditation fees.

b. Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide for child care centers only. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to child care centers. Describe:

N/A

c. Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide for family child care homes only. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to family child care. Describe:

N/A

d. Yes, the state/territory has supports operating as a pilot-test or in a few localities but not statewide or territory-wide.

i. Focused on child care centers. Describe:

N/A

ii. Focused on family child care homes. Describe:

N/A

e. No, but the state/territory is in the in the development phase of supporting accreditation.

i. Focused on child care centers. Describe:

N/A

ii. Focused on family child care homes. Describe:

N/A

f. No, the state/territory has no plans for supporting accreditation.

7.8.2 Measurable indicators of progress relevant to Subsection 7.8

Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.8 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency measures progress around programs' accreditation attainment monthly. Both the overall number of accredited programs and the number of accredited programs by accrediting body are used to evaluate progress in this area.

7.9 Program Standards

7.9.1 High-Quality program standards

Describe how the state/territory supports state/territory or local efforts to develop or adopt high-quality program standards, including standards for:

a. Infants and toddlers

The Lead Agency is part of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) group in which a coordinated regional approach is used to disseminate materials and provide or facilitate professional development opportunities in concert with YoungStar regional training, technical assistance, and quality improvement efforts. The Lead Agency's efforts in WECCP focus on WMELS, Wisconsin Pyramid Model, community approaches to 4-year-old kindergarten, inclusion of children with disabilities, support for children from families experiencing homelessness, culturally responsive practices (including tribal populations in particular), and other topics as identified by regional needs. The Lead Agency has an Interagency Agreement with DPI to provide services for the development, dissemination, translation, and support of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS), the Wisconsin Pyramid Model, and other high-quality practices and materials. These services support high quality early learning experiences for all children through a network of Communities of Practice. The Lead Agency, in conjunction with DPI, DHS, and the WECCP Healthy Children Committee, created and continues to use the Comprehensive and Aligned System for Early Childhood Screening and Assessment: Wisconsin's Blueprint, Third Edition 2016, to provide a comprehensive screening and assessment system in Wisconsin across sectors (school districts, Birth to Three, child care programs) to share information, develop data sharing with a focus on the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ), and promote aligned screening and assessment practices via cross-sector professional development. The Lead Agency supports and recognizes the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (WI-AIMH) and its focus on promoting the healthy social and emotional development of all Wisconsin children from birth through age five. The Wisconsin Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Plan is a blueprint for a comprehensive system of care that includes prevention, early intervention, and treatment. The Wisconsin Pyramid Model is a multi-level system of support that offers evidence-based strategies for parents and professionals to support children's optimal development and prevent challenging behaviors. It is consistent with the public health/mental health model of promotion, prevention, and intervention. A 24-hour training model is available for child care providers and other professionals working with young children. Program-wide implementation supports, with additional coaching beyond the training, are available to selected sites. Additional professional development opportunities are available to practicing professionals through the Infant, Early Childhood, and Family Mental Health Capstone Certificate Program and the WI-AIMH Endorsement. The Lead Agency works in collaboration with higher education and The Registry to align infant toddler coursework, especially the Infant Toddler Credential, with Infant Mental Health competencies and to develop supports to assist credential graduates in obtaining the Infant Mental Health Endorsement. The Lead Agency, in

conjunction with DPI and DHS, reviews and makes continuous improvements to Healthy Bites: A Wisconsin Guide for Improving Childhood Nutrition to infuse changes made to the CACFP and YoungStar Evaluation Criteria based on best-practice recommendations. Wisconsin continues to include Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC) materials in the latest revision as well as Out of School Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative (OSNAP) self-assessment materials from Harvard University for use with out-of-school time programs. Additionally, the 10 Steps to Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Centers training is available online and in person in Spanish or English. In 2021 the QRIS made a significant revision in structure, moving from a point system to a block system. This move from points to blocks came as a result of an effectiveness study done by the University of Wisconsin's Institute for Research on Poverty indicating that the required indicators for each Star rating were more influential in determining quality than a total number of points. The revision simplified the rating process, removing points and instead awarding star levels based on required indicators. This change has allowed programs and consultants to focus their attention on fewer indicators at the 3 Star level, ensuring a solid foundation before adding additional high-quality practices. The QRIS has moved to use the most current and updated versions of the Environment Rating Scales, ECERS-3, ITERS-3, FCCERS-3 and SACERS-U. Through extensive training with the ERS Institute, the YoungStar workforce was prepared to support providers locally in adapting to and understanding changes in the updated tools. The Lead Agency is currently developing two badges for programs to earn by demonstrating their exemplary program-wide and classroom practices for teaching social emotional competencies to young children and caring for children with special needs. Programs meeting these high standards will be issued a badge, either the Social Emotional or Inclusion badge. Earning each badge will be incentivized and featured on the public child care search site.

The Lead Agency takes a central role in the Wisconsin Infant Toddler Policy Project (WITPP). This collaborative effort aims for a policy agenda around three main goals. First, all low-income families with young children, and others who touch the lives of infants and very young children, have equitable access to the information and supports they need to promote optimal early childhood development and well-being. Second, every low-income family with an infant and/or toddler will have equitable access to a range of affordable, high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive child care options that meet their family and employment needs. And third, the early childhood workforce will have the skills, training, and support to deliver high-quality care while receiving commensurate compensation. The WITPP work is done with the support of a large cross-sector group of agencies, businesses, and institutions of higher education from across the state. Examples of partners include Black Child Development Institute of Milwaukee, Ho-Chunk Nation Department of Education, Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative, Office of the Governor, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and the Pediatric Association.

b. Preschoolers

The Lead Agency is part of the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) group in which a coordinated regional approach is used to disseminate materials and provide or facilitate professional development opportunities in concert with YoungStar regional training, technical assistance, and quality improvement efforts. The Lead Agency's efforts in WECCP focus on WMELS, Wisconsin Pyramid Model, community approaches to 4-year-old kindergarten, inclusion of children with disabilities, support for children from families experiencing homelessness, culturally responsive practices (including tribal populations in particular), and other topics as identified by regional needs. The Lead Agency has an Interagency Agreement with DPI to provide services for the development, dissemination, translation, and support of the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS), the Wisconsin Pyramid Model, and other high-quality practices and materials. These services support high quality early learning experiences for all children through a network of Communities of Practice.

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c. and/or School-age children.

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7.9.2 Measurable indicators of progress relevant to Subsection 7.9

Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.9 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.

The Lead Agency has specific quality indicators in YoungStar related to high-quality program standards, including those for infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. The requirements for meeting these quality indicators are reviewed each year. The Lead Agency monitors the percentage of programs meeting these quality indicators over time. The Lead Agency also partners with the University of Wisconsin System to present health and nutrition data on providers by county to visually demonstrate the progress in meeting these indicators. Finally, the Lead Agency will continually examine and report on the accessibility of high-quality child care that is responsive to all families' needs.

7.10 Other Quality Improvement Activities

7.10.1 Other quality improvement activities and measurable indicators of progress

List and describe any other activities that the state/territory provides to improve the quality of child care services for infants and toddlers, preschool-aged, and school-aged children, which may include consumer and provider education activities; and also describe the measurable indicators of progress for each activity relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry, and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. Describe:

The Lead Agency supports additional training and technical assistance to rural and tribal communities. Contracted YoungStar staff received reliability training on the new Environment Rating Scales tools before the Lead Agency implemented the 3rd editions as the YoungStar rating tool in 2021. With Preschool Development Grant funds, the Lead Agency was able to enter into a partnership with WIDA, a recognized and trusted leader in resources and services for supporting the success of multilingual learners in early childhood and K-12 settings. Within this partnership, WIDA and DCF: updated the Wisconsin Connection document, which presents a crosswalk between the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and the WIDA Early English Language Development Standards; provided access to WIDA Early Years online learning modules for an unlimited number of early educators to support young multilingual learners; and critically evaluated language-focused family engagement, child assessment, teacher-child interactions, environment, and child developmental screening practices within the YoungStar evaluation criteria. The Lead Agency also contracted with the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners Group to translate the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards Family Tip Sheets into Spanish and make them available statewide, and to fund and work with three Regional Early Childhood Outreach Specialists who have education and experience around: 4K/4KCA and inclusion practices within general education; Homeless and Child Find activities/information; Culturally and linguistically responsive practices/Tribal Nations. Through Preschool Development Grant funds, the Lead Agency was able to provide free memberships to The Registry to all Wisconsin early care and education professionals. The Registry is the sole entity that verifies whether early childhood professionals meet or exceed entry level and on-going training requirements established by the Lead Agency's regulatory section. It determines placement on The Registry Career Levels based on each ECE professional's education and training and records educational and professional contributions that surpass basic requirements. By increasing the number of professionals who are current members of The Registry by over 13,500 through this initiative, the Lead Agency can more accurately understand early educators in terms of educational background, continuing education, demographic information, and wage data.

8 Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

Program integrity and accountability activities are integral to the effective administration of the CCDF program. Lead Agencies are required to describe in their Plan effective internal controls that ensure integrity and accountability while maintaining the continuity of services (98.16(cc)). These accountability measures should address reducing fraud, waste, and abuse, including program violations and administrative errors.

This section includes topics on internal controls to ensure integrity and accountability and processes in place to investigate and recover fraudulent payments and to impose sanctions on clients or providers in response to fraud. Respondents should consider how fiscal controls, program integrity, and accountability apply to:

- Memorandums of understanding (MOUs) within the Lead Agency's various divisions that administer or carry out the various aspects of CCDF
- MOUs, grants, or contracts to other state agencies that administer or carry out various aspects of

CCDF

- Grants or contracts to other organizations that administer or carry out various aspects of CCDF, such as professional development and family engagement activities
- Internal processes for conducting child care provider subsidy

8.1 Internal Controls and Accountability Measures to Help Ensure Program Integrity

8.1.1 Fiscal management practices

Lead Agencies must ensure the integrity of the use of funds through sound fiscal management and must ensure that financial practices are in place (98.68 (a)(1)). Describe the processes in place for the Lead Agency to ensure sound fiscal management practices for all expenditures of CCDF funds. Check all that apply:

a. Verifying and processing billing records to ensure timely payments to providers. Describe:

Parents participating in the Wisconsin Shares program have the ability to review and access their child's authorization hours and funds via the Wisconsin Shares Parent Portal. Parents can make subsidy payments to their provider over the phone, online or, if the provider chooses to have an EBT swipe card reader, parents may make payments to the provider using their EBT card at the provider's facility. If the subsidy amount in the parent's account does not cover the total amount of the provider's price, parents are responsible for paying providers the difference between the subsidy amount and the provider price as well as any additional fees charged by the provider. Automated systems maintained by the Lead Agency track and store information related to subsidy funds loaded to a parent's EBT card as well as payments made by parents to the provider. The system also retains information on funds that expire off the EBT card after 90 days of inactivity, as well as funds that are retracted.

b. Fiscal oversight of grants and contracts. Describe:

The Lead Agency requires contracted local agencies to submit a Fraud Plan annually that outlines the agency's procedures for fraud detection and prevention. Local agencies report statistics on their program integrity related activities through their Fraud Plan. The Lead Agency contracts with United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) to provide care for children of migrant farmworkers. UMOS contract expenditures are monitored by the Lead Agency on a monthly basis.

c. Tracking systems to ensure reasonable and allowable costs. Describe:

The Lead Agency and local agency contractors are both subject to annual single audit guidelines to ensure proper fiscal controls. The Lead Agency implements a series of performance measures annually with local agencies to measure contract compliance and specific contracted tasks. The Lead Agency performs annual quality assurance reviews in which targeted policies are reviewed and a sampling of cases processed by the local agency is audited to confirm compliance with policy. A review of Federal Improper Payments is completed by the Lead Agency every three years to ensure that funds are properly applied to eligible families.

d. Other. Describe:

The Lead Agency has procedures in place to remove or retract funds that have been loaded to a parent's EBT card if it is discovered that the parent's payment amount had been incorrectly calculated, the parent no longer needed child care, or the parent was found ineligible for the level of subsidy received. This retraction process is done in an effort to avoid potential overpayments made by clients when completing payments to providers using subsidy funds for which the client was not eligible. A total

of 3,653 retractions were completed in 2020 which resulted in \$2,211,520.07 being returned to the state. The Lead Agency offers providers the option to voluntarily repay any funds that have been incorrectly paid to the provider using a Voluntary Repayment Agreement form. A total of 4,362 voluntary repayments were completed in 2020 for a total amount of \$1,375,000.32 returned to the state.

8.1.2 Identifying risk

Check and describe the processes that the Lead Agency will use to identify risk in their CCDF program (98.68(a)(2)). Check all that apply:

a. Conduct a risk assessment of policies and procedures. Describe:

The Lead Agency, local agencies, and other stakeholders conduct reviews to identify potential risk. An analysis is conducted of the potential impact new policies and procedures may have on families, providers, and local agency workers. After review and analysis is completed, the Lead Agency publishes and distributes to local agencies Operations Memos containing information on new program integrity policies and procedures. In response to impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, payments to providers were reassessed. The Lead Agency made automatic payments to providers who had active authorizations during the Wisconsin Safer at Home Order (months of March 2020 to June 2020). The Lead Agency also re-issued funds that providers had voluntarily returned as a result of a COVID-19 exposure or preemptive closures in response to COVID-19 in order to support provider sustainability.

b. Establish checks and balances to ensure program integrity. Describe:

The Lead Agency requires local agencies to utilize a process called Front End Verification as a method of fraud prevention. Front End Verification is a process of additional scrutiny for cases that exhibit characteristics of potential program violations or errors. When a case is referred for Front End Verification, the local agency is expected to perform a more in-depth verification process. The local agency verifies the accuracy of information provided by the parent at application, review, or time of a change. Results are used in verifying eligibility for program services or for fraud investigation referrals when applicable. The Lead Agency hosts regular meetings with representatives from local agencies and external stakeholders to provide information on updated policies and procedures related to program integrity and to receive feedback on the impact of new policies and procedures at the local level. The Lead Agency holds regular meetings with the Child Care Program Committee and Child Care Advisory Committee in which local agencies and external stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input on the impact of child care program integrity policies and procedures. Quarterly meetings are held internally within the Lead Agency in order to provide staff with current information that is to be passed on to local agencies related to program integrity policies, procedures, and system enhancements. The Lead Agency conducts quarterly Targeted Case Reviews by selecting random samples of case files from each local agency to identify administrative errors and program areas that the local agency may need assistance with. The Lead Agency provides in-person and online training and/or technical assistance to local agencies as needed. Several computer-based trainings are also available on demand for local agencies to access to further support on policy and procedure. The Lead Agency also conducts a Federal Improper Payment review every three years. These reviews focus on eligibility determination, authorization, and correct issuance of subsidy funds. Using the data provided by the local agency fraud plan, the Lead Agency establishes a program integrity tier for each agency or consortium. The tier system identifies areas where additional training and technical assistance may be necessary. The Lead Agency has also established regular communication via a weekly e-mail listserv message to keep local agencies informed on all child care subsidy related topics and updates. This form of communication has proved to be extremely helpful during these fast-changing times as the Lead Agency has provided support due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

c. Use supervisory reviews to ensure accuracy in eligibility determination. Describe:

The Lead Agency completes Quality Assurance, a multi-faceted tool used to ensure quality and

accuracy in the application of Wisconsin Shares policy. This equates to a higher level of service for the families served by the Lead Agency and allows it to maintain the integrity of subsidy funds. The Quality Assurance process includes the weekly review of randomly selected cases using criteria closely aligned with the Targeted Case Reviews conducted by the Lead Agency, timely performance feedback, and the compilation of data used to promote proper payment practices for the Wisconsin Shares program.

d. Other. Describe:

Providers are required to have a written payment agreement with all families receiving Wisconsin Shares. Providers are required to notify the local agency if the child of a parent who receives child care subsidy has not attended the provider within the previous 30 consecutive calendar days. A parent's attempt to sell access to the child's subsidy funds to an unauthorized person is considered a serious violation within the enforcement model and may be assessed as collusion. Providers are prohibited from possessing a parent's EBT card, EBT account number, PIN number, or any photo or other representation of the EBT card.

8.1.3 Processes to train about CCDF requirements and program integrity

States and territories are required to describe effective internal controls that are in place to ensure program integrity and accountability (98.68(a)), including processes to train child care providers and staff of the Lead Agency and other agencies engaged in the administration of CCDF about program requirements and integrity.

a. Check and describe how the state/territory ensures that all providers for children receiving CCDF funds are informed and trained regarding CCDF requirements and integrity (98.68(a)(3)). Check all that apply.

i. Issue policy change notices. Describe:

The Lead Agency issues Operations Memos to announce all new and updated policies and procedures. The Operations Memos are distributed via a listserv to Lead Agency staff and local agencies. The Lead Agency also communicates policy updates via email on a weekly basis to Lead Agency staff and local agencies.

ii. Issue policy manual. Describe:

The Lead Agency publishes periodic updates to the Wisconsin Shares Handbook, Chapter 4 related to program integrity. The Lead Agency publishes an Operations Memo outlining changes when updated versions of the handbook are published. The Operations Memos are distributed via a listserv to Lead Agency staff and local agency staff.

iii. Provide orientations.

N/A

iv. Provide training. Describe:

The Lead Agency provides training to local agency child care staff throughout the state regarding current policies related to program integrity as well as updates to policies and procedures. Staff are required to complete Child Care New Worker training within six months of beginning employment. New Worker training emphasizes the importance of enforcing compliance and integrity of the Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar programs by monitoring, investigating, and recovering misapplied funds. In addition, specialized Program Integrity training is offered to both Lead Agency staff and local agency staff. This training covers the five guiding principles of program integrity: prevention, detection, investigation, sanction, and collection. Operations Memos are released and distributed to Lead Agency staff and local agency staff when program integrity related policies and procedure updates are issued. Operations Memos are also reviewed during quarterly Child Care Program Committee and Child Care Advisory Committee meetings attended by Lead Agency and local

agency staff. Technical Assistance user guides are updated on a regular basis to provide instruction to local agencies on policies, procedures and system enhancements. The Lead Agency provides a Program Integrity Technical Assistance mailbox that is utilized by local agency workers for questions related to program integrity policies and procedures. A total of 6,393 technical assistance requests were received in 2020. A Child Care Fraud mailbox is also available to local agency workers and to the general public for reporting suspected child care fraud.

v. Monitor and assess policy implementation on an ongoing basis. Describe:

The Lead Agency hosts regular meetings with representatives from local agencies and external stakeholders to provide information on new and updated policies and procedures related to program integrity and to receive feedback on the implementation of policies and procedures at the local level. The Lead Agency holds regular meetings with the Child Care Program Committee and Child Care Advisory Committee in which local agencies and external stakeholders have an opportunity to provide input on the impact of child care program integrity policies and procedures. Quarterly meetings are held internally within the Lead Agency in order to provide staff with current information that is to be passed onto local agencies related to program integrity policies, procedures, and system enhancements. The Lead Agency conducts quarterly Targeted Case Reviews by selecting random samples of case files from each local agency to assure policies are implemented correctly.

vi. Meet regularly regarding the implementation of policies. Describe:

The Lead Agency hosts quarterly Child Care Program Committee (CCPC) and Child Care Advisory Committee (CCAC) meetings which are attended by Lead Agency staff and local agency staff. The Lead Agency also provides hands-on training and walk-throughs of new and updated policies and procedures for automated systems including the Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System. The lead Agency hosts system automation trainings when changes to systems are introduced. The Lead Agency is currently developing curriculum for local agency networking meetings which will be held at local agencies throughout the state and will train staff of program integrity policy and procedure.

vii. Other. Describe:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of staff have adapted to working remotely from home. In order to accommodate staff working remotely, the Lead Agency has adapted program integrity trainings to virtual on-line trainings that can be accessed by Lead Agency staff and local agency staff from home.

b. Check and describe how the Lead Agency ensures that all its staff members and any staff members in other agencies who administer the CCDF program through MOUs, grants and contracts are informed and trained regarding program requirements and integrity (98.68 (a)(3)).

Check all that apply:

i. Issue policy change notices. Describe:

The Lead Agency issues Operations Memos to announce new or updated policies. The Operations Memos are distributed via a listserv to providers. The Lead Agency also communicates policy updates via the Child Care Provider Portal and via email on a bi-weekly basis to providers.

ii. Train on policy change notices. Describe:

In 2019, the Lead Agency conducted provider program integrity trainings which were developed by the Lead Agency's Bureau of Operations and Planning. Online Wisconsin Shares Program Integrity training for providers is available on the DCF website at:

(https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/elearning/wishares-programintegrity/story_html5.html)

https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/elearning/wishares-programintegrity/story_html5.html

iii. Issue policy manuals. Describe:

The Lead Agency publishes periodic updates to the Wisconsin Shares Handbook, Chapter 4 related to program integrity. The Lead Agency publishes an Operations Memo outlining changes when an updated version of the handbook is published. The Operations Memo is distributed via a listserv to providers.

iv. Train on policy manual. Describe:

The Lead Agency is responsible for the ongoing training of all state, tribal, and county child care workers in all areas of the Wisconsin Shares program, including the program integrity policies and procedures. Training is provided throughout the state via a variety of training platforms to ensure access for all child care workers even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

v. Monitor and assess policy implementation on an ongoing basis. Describe:

The Lead Agency conducts random visits of providers to ensure that providers maintain accurate daily attendance records and to ensure that providers have a written payment agreement with each family that receives Wisconsin Shares for a child to attend the provider's facility.

vi. Meet regularly regarding the implementation of policies. Describe:

N/A

vii. Other. Describe:

N/A

8.1.4 Evaluate internal control activities

Describe the processes in place to regularly evaluate Lead Agency internal control activities (98.68 (a)(4)). Describe:

The Lead Agency conducts Targeted Case Reviews (TCR) which are an internal review of eligibility and authorizations. The TCRs are conducted to evaluate if the parent was issued the correct subsidy amount and to determine if child care need was calculated accurately. The Lead Agency also conducts the Federal Improper Payment (FIP) review every three years in order to monitor local agency eligibility and authorization determinations. The Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS) reports assess benefits for a parent who may have received benefits in two or more states during the same time period. The Benefit Recovery Investigation Tracking System (BRITS) is an automated referral sharing database used to share program integrity and fraud related referrals with other Wisconsin State Public Benefit Programs. The Lead Agency conducts reviews and approvals of all client intentional program violations issued for the State of Wisconsin. The Lead Agency also conducts the majority of all provider investigations and works closely with local agencies in their provider program integrity efforts.

8.1.5 Identify fraud and other program violations

Lead Agencies conduct a wide variety of activities to fight fraud and ensure program integrity. Lead Agencies are required to have processes in place to identify fraud and other program violations to ensure program integrity. Program violations can include both intentional and unintentional client and/or provider violations, as defined by the Lead Agency. These violations and errors, identified through the error-rate review process, may result in payment or nonpayment (administrative) errors and may or may not be the result of fraud, based on the Lead Agency definition. Check and describe any activities that the Lead Agency conducts to ensure program integrity.

a. Check and describe all activities that the Lead Agency conducts, including the results of these

activities, to **identify and prevent fraud or intentional program violations**. Include in the description how each activity assists in the identification and prevention of fraud and intentional program violations.

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| <p>[x]</p> | <p>i. Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)). Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Lead Agency participates in the production and investigation PARIS reports to detect clients who have received benefits in more than one state at the same time and to recover any subsidy funds paid to parents who were not eligible for the amount of subsidy received. Any instance discovered of a client receiving benefits from multiple states is entered as a fraud referral. When a match is received, a letter is sent to the corresponding state requesting information on benefit start and end dates. Responses from other states are entered into BRITS, which allows shared referral information. Referral sharing includes public benefit programs; Medicaid, Medicare, FoodShare, Wisconsin Works Program (W2), and Wisconsin Shares.</p> |
| <p>[x]</p> | <p>ii. Run system reports that flag errors (include types). Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Lead Agency develops red flag reports that collect and analyze data from clients and child care providers receiving CCDF funds. Each red flag is programmed with a threshold to measure results that may indicate further investigation is needed for a particular client or provider. Examples of client red flag reports are: Unusual Parent Schedule (parent schedule does not align with child care need); Current Weekly Authorized Hours Greater Than 50; Current Schedules for Approved Parent Activity; EBT Cards Replaced within 12 Months; Funds About to Expire; Inactive EBT Cards for More Than 30 Days with a Balance; Expungement; and Multiple Providers Including Child Care Need Schedule. Examples of provider red flag reports are: Unusual Payment Timing; Payment Grouping; Provider Overcapacity; Child Mobility; and Unusual Revenue Growth. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$441,062.64 in provider overpayments for intentional violations, and \$309,384.25 in claims were established for client intentional program violations.</p> |

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| [x] | <p>iii. Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>The Lead Agency requires providers to have a written payment agreement with each family that receives Wisconsin Shares subsidy to attend their facility. Written payment agreements are reviewed during the course of a provider investigation. If a provider is found to be out of compliance with the requirement to have a written payment agreement with each family receiving subsidy, the provider may receive technical assistance or a sanction for multiple violations. Provider attendance records are also reviewed during the process of provider investigations. Any inaccuracies, discrepancies, evidence of non-attendance, or falsified records discovered during the course of an investigation may result in provider overpayment. Providers are also responsible to repay funds received when the provider was in violation of limits on regulated capacity related to the number of children in care. Additional violations include receiving payment for a child authorized to the incorrect provider location, receiving payment when the provider was not actively in operation or not regulated, and a provider who has inaccurately reported or misused the credentials of individuals to receive a higher YoungStar rating. Violations which are considered egregious, or defined as intentional fraud, including collusion to defraud the Wisconsin Shares or YoungStar programs, will result in a provider being permanently suspended from the program. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$441,062.64 in provider overpayments for intentional violations, and \$309,384.25 in claims were established for client intentional program violations.</p> |
| [x] | <p>iv. Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>The Lead Agency conducts quarterly Targeted Case Reviews by selecting random samples of case files from each local agency to identify administrative errors and program areas that the local agency may need assistance with. Based on the results of the Targeted Case Reviews, the Lead Agency provides training and/or technical assistance to local agencies as needed.</p> |
| [x] | <p>v. Audit provider records.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>The Lead Agency reviews provider attendance records during the process of provider investigations. Any inaccuracies or discrepancies in provider records found during the course of an investigation may result in provider overpayment. Providers are also responsible to repay funds received when the provider was in violation of limits on regulated capacity related to the number of children in care. In 2020, the Lead Agency completed 185 provider investigations which included random visits, red flag referrals, fraud mailbox referrals, and referrals regarding providers who received funds during a closed status. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$441,062.64 in provider overpayments for intentional violations.</p> |

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| [x] | vi. Train staff on policy and/or audits. Describe the activities and the results of these activities: Lead Agency staff who are responsible for completing audits utilize operations manuals as well as training from management on how to complete the audit process. Lead agency staff also receive policy updates through Operations Memos and unit meetings. |
| [] | vii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities: N/A |

b. Check and describe all activities the Lead Agency conducts, including the results of these activities, to **identify unintentional program violations**. Include in the description how each activity assists in the identification and prevention of unintentional program violations.

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| [x] | i. Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)). Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Lead Agency participates in the production and investigation of PARIS reports to detect clients who have received benefits in more than one state at the same time and to recover any subsidy funds paid to clients who were not eligible for the amount of subsidy received. Any instance discovered of a client receiving benefits from multiple states is entered as a fraud referral. When a match is received, a letter is sent to the corresponding state requesting information on benefit start and end date. Responses from other states are entered into BRITS, which then allows shared referral knowledge of the match. Referral sharing includes public benefit programs; Medicaid, Medicare, FoodShare, Wisconsin Works Program (W2), and Wisconsin Shares. |
| [x] | ii. Run system reports that flag errors (include types). Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Lead Agency develops red flag reports that collect and analyze data from clients and providers receiving CCDF funds. Each red flag is programmed with a threshold to measure results that may indicate further investigation is needed for a particular client or provider. Examples of client red flag reports are: Unusual Parent Schedule (parent schedule does not align with child care need); Current Weekly Authorized Hours Greater Than 50; Current Schedules for Approved Parent Activity; EBT Cards Replaced within 12 Months; Funds About to Expire; Inactive EBT Cards for More Than 30 Days with a Balance; Expungement; and Multiple Providers Including Child Care Need Schedule. Examples of provider red flag reports are: Unusual Payment Timing; Payment Grouping; Provider Over Capacity; Child Mobility; and Unusual Revenue Growth. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments for unintentional provider violations, and \$1,267,864.04 in claims were established for unintentional client program violations. |

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| [x] | <p>iii. Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>The Lead Agency requires providers to have a written payment agreement with each family that receives Wisconsin Shares subsidy for a child to attend their facility. Written payment agreements are reviewed during the course of a provider investigation. If a provider is found to be out of compliance with the requirement to have a written payment agreement with each family receiving subsidy, the provider may receive technical assistance or sanction for multiple violations. Provider attendance records are also reviewed during the process of provider investigations. Any inaccuracies, discrepancies, evidence of nonattendance, or falsified records discovered in an investigation may result in provider overpayments. Providers are also responsible to repay funds received when the provider was in violation of limits on regulated capacity related to the number of children in care. Additional violations include receiving payment for children authorized to the incorrect provider location, receiving payment when provider is not actively in operation or not regulated, and providers who have inaccurately reported or misused the credentials of individuals to receive a higher YoungStar rating. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments for unintentional violations. Client investigations are completed by the Lead Agency and Local Agencies. Unintentional program violations discovered are assessed and completed by local agencies, however, the Lead Agency does provide ongoing technical assistance regarding policy clarification and application of policy to assess accurate overpayments. In 2020, overpayments for client claims for unintentional program violations established totaled \$1,267,864.04.</p> |
| [x] | <p>iv. Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>The Lead Agency conducts quarterly TCRs by selecting random samples of case files from each local agency to identify administrative errors and program areas that the local agency may need assistance with. Based on the results of the TCR, the Lead Agency provides training and/or technical assistance to local agencies as needed.</p> |

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| [x] | <p>v. Audit provider records.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>The Lead Agency reviews provider attendance records during provider investigations. Any inaccuracies or discrepancies in provider records found during the course of an investigation may result in provider overpayment. Providers are also responsible to repay funds received when the provider was in violation of limits on regulated capacity related to the number of children in care. In 2020, the Lead Agency completed 185 provider investigations, which included random visits, red flag referrals, fraud mailbox referrals, and referrals regarding providers who received funds during a closed status. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments for unintentional provider violations, and \$1,267,864.04 in claims were established for unintentional client program violations.</p> |
| [x] | <p>vi. Train staff on policy and/or audits.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>Lead Agency staff who are responsible for completing audits utilize operations manuals as well as training from management on how to apply policy to complete audits and investigations. Staff also receive policy updates through Operations Memos and unit meetings.</p> |
| [] | <p>vii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>N/A</p> |

c. Check and describe all activities that the Lead Agency conducts, including the results of these activities, to **identify and prevent agency errors**. Include in the description how each activity assists in the identification and prevention of agency errors.

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| [x] | <p>i. Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)).</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>The Lead Agency participates in the production and investigation of PARIS reports to detect clients who have received benefits in more than one state at the same time and to recover any subsidy funds paid to clients who were not eligible for the amount of subsidy received. The Lead Agency also submits a FIP report every three years to identify agency errors and conducts additional Targeted Case Reviews to ensure that subsidy funds are being used appropriately.</p> |
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| [x] | <p>ii. Run system reports that flag errors (include types). Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Lead Agency develops red flag reports that collect and analyze data from clients and child care providers receiving CCDF funds. Each red flag is programmed with a threshold to measure results that may indicate further investigation is needed for a particular client or provider. Examples of client red flag reports are: Unusual Parent Schedule (parent schedule does not align with child care need); Current Weekly Authorized Hours Greater Than 50; Current Schedules for Approved Parent Activity; EBT Cards Replaced within 12 Months; Funds About to Expire; Inactive EBT Cards for More Than 30 Days with a Balance; Expungement; and Multiple Providers Including Child Care Need Schedule. Examples of provider red flag reports are: Unusual Payment Timing; Payment Grouping; Provider Over Capacity; Child Mobility; and Unusual Revenue Growth. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$42,738.88 in client overpayment claims for agency error. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments for unintentional provider violations, including agency error.</p> |
| [x] | <p>iii. Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records. Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Lead Agency requires providers to have a written payment agreement with each family that receives Wisconsin Shares subsidy for a child to attend their facility. Payment agreements are reviewed during the course of a provider investigation. If a provider is found to be out of compliance with the requirement to have a written payment agreement with each family receiving subsidy, the provider may receive technical assistance or sanction for multiple violations. Provider attendance records are also reviewed during provider investigations. Any inaccuracies or discrepancies in provider records found during the course of an investigation may result in provider overpayments. Providers are responsible for repaying funds received when the provider was in violation of limits on regulated capacity related to the number of children in care. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$42,738.88 in client overpayment claims for agency error. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments for unintentional provider violations, including agency error.</p> |
| [x] | <p>iv. Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews. Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Lead Agency conducts quarterly Targeted Case Reviews by selecting random samples of case files from each local agency to identify administrative errors and program areas that the local agency may need assistance with. Based on the results of the Targeted Case Reviews, the Lead Agency provides training and/or technical assistance to local agencies as needed.</p> |

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| [x] | <p>v. Audit provider records.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>The Lead Agency reviews provider attendance records during the process of provider investigations. Any inaccuracies or discrepancies in provider records found during the course of an investigation may result in provider overpayment. Providers are also responsible to repay funds received when the provider was in violation of limits on regulated capacity related to the number of children in care. In 2020, the Lead Agency completed 185 provider investigations, which included random visits, red flag referrals, fraud mailbox referrals, and referrals regarding providers who received funds during a closed status. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$42,738.88 in client overpayment claims for agency error. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments for unintentional provider violations, including agency error.</p> |
| [x] | <p>vi. Train staff on policy and/or audits.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>Lead Agency staff who are responsible for completing audits utilize operations manuals as well as training from management on how to apply policy to complete audits and investigations. Staff also receive policy updates through Operations Memos and unit meetings.</p> |
| [x] | <p>vii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p>The Lead Agency only collects client overpayments for agency errors if the client was ineligible for the amount of subsidy received. The Lead Agency does not collect client overpayments for agency errors that are solely related to the child’s authorization, if the client was eligible for the amount of subsidy received. The Lead Agency utilizes an Enforcement Model for provider violations. The first instance of a provider violation that is not considered a serious violation will result in the Lead Agency providing a signed Technical Assistance Letter regarding the issue(s) in order to ensure the provider understands all program requirements. Instances of a serious provider violation may result in the provider being issued a forfeiture for each violation. Serious provider violations include; providers who are found to be in possession of a photocopy, photo or other image of a parents EBT card; providers who are found to be in possession of a parent’s subsidy account number or PIN; and providers who fail to notify the local agency when a child who receives subsidy to attend their facility has not attended within the previous 30 calendar days.</p> |

8.1.6 Identify and recover misspent funds

The Lead Agency is required to identify and recover misspent funds as a result of fraud, and it has the option to recover any misspent funds as a result of errors.

- a. Identify what agency is responsible for pursuing fraud and overpayments (e.g. State Office of the Inspector General, State Attorney).

The Lead Agency is responsible for monitoring, investigating, and pursuing fraud and overpayments for provider errors and fraud. The Lead Agency and local agencies are both actively responsible for monitoring, investigating, and assessing overpayments for client error

and fraud.

b. Check and describe all activities, including the results of such activity, that the Lead Agency uses to investigate and recover improper payments due to fraud. Include in the description how each activity assists in the investigation and recovery of improper payment due to fraud or intentional program violations. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

i. Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

Any funds in excess of \$1 that are loaded to a parent's EBT card, for which the parent was ineligible and which the parent paid to the provider, are recovered. This minimum dollar amount for recovery regulatory reference is: . Additionally, funds paid to the provider during a period of ineligibility are recovered through a client or provider overpayment/collections process.

ii. Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency). Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency has coordinated investigative efforts with a variety of entities at the local, state, and federal level. This includes, but is not limited to, Child Support offices, local sheriff's departments, local police departments, Department of Health Services, Office of the Inspector General, Department of Workforce Development Unemployment Fraud Units, Department of Public Instruction Food Program Fraud Unit, Department of Revenue, and Federal level investigations involving Wisconsin providers or clients. Collaboration ranges from referral sharing, discussion, coordinating of investigation activities, collaborative interviewing, and providing open record requests to support external investigation

iii. Recover through repayment plans. Describe the activities and the results of these activities

The Lead Agency allows repayment agreements via monthly payments as follows: if the overpayment is under \$500, the debtor must pay monthly installments of at least \$50 per month; if the overpayment is over \$500, the debtor must pay in equal monthly installments over 36 months. However, the minimum monthly payment is \$20 per month. Collection revenue in 2020 for client repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$1,595,586.55. Collection revenue in 2020 for provider repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$102,346.74. In 2020, 236 provider claims were sent to the Department of Revenue (DOR) in the amount of \$1,454,310.55, and \$9,638.12 was recovered via DOR.

iv. Reduce payments in subsequent months. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

N/A

v. Recover through state/territory tax intercepts. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

At Delinquency, the balance of any overpayment(s) is referred to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) for interception of any tax refund and credit, authorized under Wis. Statutes, s.49.85. Collection revenue in 2020 for client repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$1,595,586.55. Collection revenue in 2020 for provider repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$102,346.74. In 2020, 236 provider claims were sent to the Department of Revenue (DOR) in the amount of \$1,454,310.55, and \$9,638.12 was recovered via DOR.

vi. Recover through other means. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

At Delinquency, the balance is subject to both lien and levy collection actions. These actions are authorized under Wis. Statutes, s.49.195. A wage levy compels the debtor's employer to withhold up to 25% of the debtor's earnings and submit it to the State for payment. A warrant (lien) can be issued against the debtor as well. This creates a lien on all real and personal property and hinders the ability to purchase/sell property until the lien is satisfied. Collection revenue in 2020 for client repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$1,595,586.55. Collection revenue in 2020 for provider repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$102,346.74. In 2020, 236 provider claims were sent to the Department of Revenue (DOR) in the amount of \$1,454,310.55, and \$9,638.12 was recovered via DOR.

vii. Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit below. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency established a program integrity unit to investigate improper payments and collect Wisconsin Shares that were improperly authorized. The Lead Agency provides program integrity services for Milwaukee County and provides guidance and technical assistance to local agencies responsible for establishing overpayments for clients in the balance of the state. In 2020, the Lead Agency received 1,401 referrals from red flag reports and the Child Care Fraud mailbox. After initial screening, referrals that are determined to be unsubstantiated and not warranting further investigation are closed. If the referral identifies an error that is correctable with technical assistance, technical assistance is provided verbally, or a technical assistance letter is mailed to the provider. A formal investigation is recommended if screening uncovers additional violations by the provider, a history of noncompliance, and/or indications of fraud or overpayment. In 2020, the Lead Agency screened 635 provider referrals and completed 185 formal investigations (29% of referrals). Of the provider formal investigations, 105 resulted in no overpayment, 54 resulted in overpayment only, seven resulted in overpayment and stipulation that the provider would follow program rules, and 19 resulted in provider permanent suspension from the Wisconsin Shares program. In 2020, \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments were established due to unintentional provider violation, and \$1,267,864.04 in client overpayments were established due to unintentional client violation.

viii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency conducts quarterly TCRs by selecting random samples of case files from each local agency to identify administrative errors and program areas that the local agency may need assistance with. The Lead Agency provides in-person and online training and/or technical assistance to local agencies as needed. The Lead Agency also conducts the FIP review every three years. These reviews focus on eligibility determination, authorization development, and correct issuance of subsidy funds.

c. Check and describe any activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to unintentional program violations. Include in the description how each activity assists in the investigation and recovery of improper payments due to unintentional program violations. Include a description of the results of such activity. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

i. N/A. the Lead Agency does not recover misspent funds due to unintentional program violations.

ii. Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

Any funds in excess of \$1 that are loaded to a parent's EBT card, for which the parent was ineligible and which the parent spent, are recovered. Additionally, funds paid to the provider during a period of ineligibility are recovered through a provider overpayment/collections process.

iii. Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency). Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency coordinates investigative efforts with a variety of entities at the local, state, and federal level. This includes, but is not limited to child support offices, local sheriff departments, local police departments, DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Unemployment Fraud Units, DPI Food Program Fraud Unit, Department of Revenue (DOR), and federal level investigations involving Wisconsin providers or clients. Collaboration ranges from referral sharing, discussion, coordination of investigation activities, collaborative interviewing, and providing open record requests to support external investigations.

iv. Recover through repayment plans. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency allows repayment agreements via monthly payments as follows: if the overpayment is under \$500, the debtor must pay monthly installments of at least \$50 per month; if the overpayment is over \$500, the debtor must pay in equal monthly installments over 36 months. However, the minimum monthly payment is \$20 per month. Collection revenue in 2020 for client repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$1,595,586.55. Collection revenue in 2020 for provider repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$102,346.74. In 2020, 236 provider claims were sent to the DOR in the amount of \$1,454,310.55, and \$9,638.12 was recovered via DOR.

v. Reduce payments in subsequent months. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

N/A

vi. Recover through state/territory tax intercepts. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

At Delinquency, the balance of any overpayment(s) is referred to DOR for interception of any tax refund and credit, authorized under Wis. Statutes, s. 49.85. Collection revenue in 2020 for repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$1,595,586.55.

vii. Recover through other means. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

At Delinquency, the balance is subject to both lien and levy collection actions. These actions are authorized under Wis. Statutes, s.49.195. A wage levy compels the debtor's employer to withhold up to 25% of the debtor's earnings and submit it to the State for payment. A warrant (lien) can be issued against the debtor as well. This creates a lien on all real and personal property and hinders the ability to purchase/sell property until the lien is satisfied. Collection revenue in 2020 for client repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$1,595,586.55. Collection revenue in 2020 for provider repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$102,346.74. In 2020, 236 provider claims were sent to DOR in the amount of \$1,454,310.55, and \$9,638.12 was recovered via DOR.

viii. Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit below. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency established a program integrity unit to investigate improper payments and collect Wisconsin Shares and YoungStar funds that were improperly authorized. The Lead Agency provides program integrity services for Milwaukee County and provides guidance and technical assistance to local agencies responsible for establishing overpayments for clients in the balance of the state. The unit includes a staff of 11 auditors who screen all child care program integrity referrals received by the Lead Agency. In 2020, the Lead Agency received 1,401 referrals from red flag reports and the Child Care Fraud mailbox. After initial screening, referrals that are determined to be unsubstantiated and not warranting further investigation are closed. If the referral

identifies an error that is correctable with technical assistance, technical assistance is provided verbally, or a technical assistance letter is mailed to the provider. A formal investigation is recommended if screening uncovers additional violations by the provider, a history of noncompliance, and/or indications of fraud or overpayment. In 2020, the Lead Agency screened 635 provider referrals and completed 185 formal investigations (29% of referrals). Of the provider formal investigations, 105 resulted in no overpayment, 54 resulted in overpayment only, seven resulted in overpayment and stipulation that the provider would follow program rules, and 19 resulted in provider permanent suspension from the Wisconsin Shares program. In 2020, \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments were established due to unintentional provider violation, and \$1,267,864.04 in client overpayments were established due to unintentional client violation.

ix. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency conducts quarterly targeted case reviews by selecting random samples of case files from each local agency to identify administrative errors and program areas that the local agency may need assistance with. The Lead Agency provides in-person and online training and/or technical assistance to local agencies as needed. The Lead Agency also conducts the FIP review every three years. These reviews focus on eligibility determination, authorization, and correct issuance of subsidy funds.

d. Check and describe all activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to agency errors. Include in the description how each activity assists in the investigation and recovery of improper payments due to administrative errors. Include a description of the results of such activity.

i. N/A. the Lead Agency does not recover misspent funds due to agency errors.

ii. Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

Any funds in excess of \$1 that are loaded to a parent's EBT card, for which the parent was ineligible and which the parent spent, are recovered. Additionally, funds paid to the provider during a period of ineligibility are recovered through a provider overpayment/collections process.

iii. Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency). Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency coordinates investigative efforts with a variety of entities at the local, state, and federal level. This includes, but is not limited to child support offices, local sheriff departments, local police departments, DHS OIG, DWD Unemployment Fraud Units, DPI Food Program Fraud Unit, DOR, and federal level investigations involving Wisconsin providers or clients. Collaboration ranges from referral sharing, discussion, coordination of investigation activities, collaborative interviewing, and providing open record requests to support external investigations.

iv. Recover through repayment plans. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency allows repayment agreements via monthly payments as follows: if the overpayment is under \$500, the debtor must pay monthly installments of at least \$50 per month; if the overpayment is over \$500, the debtor must pay in equal monthly installments over 36 months. However, the minimum monthly payment is \$20 per month. Collection revenue in 2020 for client repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$1,595,586.55. Collection revenue in 2020 for provider repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$102,346.74. In 2020, 236 provider claims were sent to the Department of Revenue (DOR) in the amount of \$1,454,310.55, and \$9,638.12 was recovered via DOR.

v. Reduce payments in subsequent months. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

N/A

vi. Recover through state/territory tax intercepts. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

At Delinquency, the balance of any overpayment(s) is referred to DOR for interception of any tax refund and credit, authorized under Wis. Statutes, s.49.85. Collection revenue in 2020 for client repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$1,595,586.55. Collection revenue in 2020 for provider repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$102,346.74. In 2020, 236 provider claims were sent to the DOR in the amount of \$1,454,310.55, and \$9,638.12 was recovered via DOR.

vii. Recover through other means. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

At Delinquency, the balance is subject to both lien and levy collection actions. These actions are authorized under Wis. Statutes, s.49.195. A wage levy compels the debtor's employer to withhold up to 25% of the debtor's earnings and submit it to the State for payment. A warrant (lien) can be issued against the debtor as well. This creates a lien on all real and personal property and hinders the ability to purchase/sell property until the lien is satisfied. Collection revenue in 2020 for client repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$1,595,586.55. Collection revenue in 2020 for provider repayment plans, tax intercept, lien and levy totaled \$102,346.74. In 2020, 236 provider claims were sent to DOR in the amount of \$1,454,310.55, and \$9,638.12 was recovered via DOR.

viii. Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency established a program integrity unit to investigate improper payments and collect Wisconsin Shares funds that were improperly authorized. The Lead Agency provides program integrity services for Milwaukee County and provides guidance and technical assistance to local agencies responsible for establishing overpayments for clients in the balance of the state. In 2020, the Lead Agency received 1,401 referrals from red flag reports and the Child Care Fraud mailbox. After initial screening, referrals that are determined to be unsubstantiated and not warranting further investigation are closed. If the referral identifies an error that is correctable with technical assistance, technical assistance is provided verbally, or a technical assistance letter is mailed to the provider. A formal investigation is recommended if screening uncovers additional violations by the provider, a history of noncompliance, and/or indications of fraud or overpayment. In 2020, the Lead Agency screened 635 provider referrals and completed 185 formal investigations (29% of referrals). Of the provider formal investigations, 105 resulted in no overpayment, 54 resulted in overpayment only, seven resulted in overpayment and stipulation that the provider would follow program rules, and 19 resulted in provider permanent suspension from the Wisconsin Shares program. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$42,738.88 in client overpayment claims for agency error. In 2020, the Lead Agency and local agencies established a total of \$218,488.60 in provider overpayments for unintentional provider violations, including agency error.

ix. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

N/A

8.1.7 Sanctions to reduce improper payments

What type of sanction will the Lead Agency place on clients and providers to help reduce improper payments due to program violations? Check and describe all that apply:

a. Disqualify the client. If checked, describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for clients who are disqualified. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

Clients who have committed an intentional program violation follow a three-strike rule. After the first violation, a client is suspended from receiving program funds for six months. After the second violation, the client is suspended for 12 months. A third violation results in the client being permanently suspended from the program. Clients are notified in writing of all decisions and violations and have 30 days to appeal the program violation. If there is an associated overpayment with the program violation, the client has 45 days to appeal the amount of overpayment. Requests for appeals are sent to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), Division of Hearings and Appeals (DHA). DHA will then assign an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) to hold a hearing for the appeal.

b. Disqualify the provider. If checked, describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for providers who are disqualified. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

Providers who are found by an investigation to have committed an intentional program violation are terminated from the program and are permanently suspended from receiving Wisconsin Shares authorizations. Providers are notified in writing of all decisions and violations and have 30 days to appeal the program violation. If there is an associated overpayment with the program violation, the provider has 30 days to appeal the amount of overpayment. Requests for appeals are sent to the DHA, which will then assign an ALJ to hold a hearing for the appeal.

c. Prosecute criminally. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

The Lead Agency has the option to refer providers or clients to the local District Attorney for criminal prosecution based on the severity of the program violation and the established fraudulent dollar amount.

d. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

N/A

Appendix A: MRS, Alternative Methodology and Narrow Cost Analysis Waiver Request Form

Lead Agencies may apply for a temporary waiver for the Market Rate Survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology and/or the narrow cost analysis in. These waivers will be considered “extraordinary circumstance waivers” to provide relief from the timeline for completing the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology and the narrow cost analysis during the COVID-19 pandemic. These waivers are limited to a one-year period.

Approval of these waiver requests is subject to and contingent on OCC review and approval of responses in Section 4, questions 4.2.1 and 4.2.5.

To submit a Market Rate Survey (MRS) or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology or a Narrow Cost Analysis waiver, complete the form below.

Check and describe each provision for which the Lead Agency is requesting a time-limited waiver extension.

Appendix A.1: The Market Rate Survey (MRS) or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology (See related question 4.2.1.)

1. Describe the provision (MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology) from which the state/territory seeks relief. Include the reason why the Lead Agency is seeking relief from this provision due to this extraordinary circumstance.

The Lead Agency is requesting a waiver from the Market Rate Survey (MRS) CCDF State Plan requirement due to the extraordinary circumstances that were caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lead Agency was poised to begin development on a more comprehensive Market Rate Survey during calendar year 2020. The impact of COVID-19 on the resources of the Lead Agency made it impossible to convene a workgroup inclusive of all major child care stakeholders. The Lead Agency will have this workgroup convened and the Market Rate Survey redesign completed and submitted to ACF-OCC for approval by the end of the 12-month waiver period.

2. Describe how a waiver of the provision will, by itself, improve the delivery of child care services for children.

The Lead Agency will utilize the waiver period to include key stakeholders in the redesign of the MRS process to better identify child care costs by geographic area, type of provider, and age of child. Through this MRS redesign the Lead Agency will utilize stakeholder relationship to ensure survey access to all providers throughout the state. Additionally, the workgroup will identify potential cost estimation models to get to the true costs of high quality child care.

3. Certify and describe how the health, safety, and well-being of children served through assistance received through CCDF will not be compromised as a result of the waiver.

The Lead Agency will continue to assess child care rates across the state and provide additional funding as available to increase rates for children of all age ranges.

Appendix A.2: The Narrow Cost Analysis (See related question 4.2.5.)

1. Describe the provision (Narrow Cost Analysis) from which the state/territory seeks relief. Include the reason why in these extraordinary circumstances, the Lead Agency is seeking relief from this provision.

The Lead Agency is requesting a waiver from the Narrow Cost Analysis CCDF State Plan requirement due to the extraordinary circumstances that were caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lead Agency was poised to begin development a narrow cost analysis during calendar year 2020 to identify the true costs of operating a child care facility. The workgroup would have further identified data techniques and sources necessary to fully measure the costs of delivering high-quality care. The impact of COVID-19 on the resources of the Lead Agency made it impossible to convene a workgroup inclusive of all major child care stakeholders. The Lead Agency will have this workgroup convened and the Narrow Cost Analysis completed and submitted to ACF-OCC for approval by the end of the 12-month waiver period.

2. Describe how a waiver of the provision will, by itself, improve the delivery of child care services for children.

The Lead Agency will utilize the waiver period to include key stakeholders in the redesign of the Narrow Cost Analysis process to better identify child care costs through the identification of basic health, safety, quality and staffing requirements. This process will allow the Lead Agency to better identify the base level of care that will in turn be part of future rate rating policy decisions.

3. Certify and describe how the health, safety, and well-being of children served through assistance received through CCDF will not be compromised as a result of the waiver.

The Lead Agency will continue to assess the costs of providing care across the state and provide additional supports to providers through a variety of available funding sources to ensure high-quality child care is available to all children and families across the state.