

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. 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.

4.1 Parental Choice in Relation to Certificates, Grants, or Contracts

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 his or her 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 his or her 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 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)).

Alaska provides benefits through a child care certificate (authorization). A parent(s) may choose from a variety of providers, including licensed centers, group homes and homes as well as legally exempt regulated child care providers participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). Care is authorized at the time the family is determined eligible for CCAP participation through a Child Care Assistance Authorization document issued to the family and the provider that identifies the children for whom child care is authorized; the provider selected by the family; the care authorized; the anticipated eligible cost of care, including the family contribution amount and anticipated benefit amount to be paid; and the period of time for which the authorization is effective.

4.1.2 Describe how the parent is informed that the child 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.

- Certificate that provides information about the choice of providers
- Certificate that provides information about the quality of providers
- Certificate not linked to a specific provider, so parents can choose any provider
- Consumer education materials on choosing child care
- Referral to child care resource and referral agencies
- Co-located resource and referral in eligibility offices
- Verbal communication at the time of the application

- Community outreach, workshops, or other in-person activities
- Other.

Describe:

4.1.3 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 4.1.4.

Yes, in some jurisdictions but not statewide.

If yes, describe how many jurisdictions use grants or contracts for child care slots.

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:

ii. The type(s) of child care services available through grants or contracts:

iii. The entities that receive contracts (e.g., shared services alliances, CCR&R agencies, FCC networks, community-based agencies, child care providers):

iv. The process for accessing grants or contracts:

v. How rates for contracted slots are set through grants and contracts:

vi. How the Lead Agency determines which entities to contract with for increasing supply and/or improving quality:

vii. If contracts are offered statewide and/or locally:

4.1.3 Child care services available through grants or contracts.

b) Will the Lead Agency use grants or contracts for child care services to increase the supply and/or quality of specific types of care? Check all that apply.

- Programs to serve children with disabilities
- Programs to serve infants and toddlers
- Programs to serve school-age children
- Programs to serve children needing non-traditional hour care
- Programs to serve children experiencing homelessness
- Programs to serve children in underserved areas
- Programs that serve children with diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds
- Programs that serve specific geographic areas
 - Urban
 - Rural
- Other

Describe

Not applicable. Per 4.1.3.a, the CCDF Lead Agency does not provide child care services through grants or contracts in addition to offering certificates.

4.1.3 Child care services available through grants or contracts.

c) Will the Lead Agency use grants or contracts for child care services to increase the quality of specific types of care? Check all that apply.

- Programs to serve children with disabilities
- Programs to serve infants and toddlers
- Programs to serve school-age children
- Programs to serve children needing non-traditional hour care
- Programs to serve homeless children
- Programs to serve children in underserved areas
- Programs that serve children with diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds
- Programs that serve specific geographic areas

- Urban
- Rural
- Other

Describe

Not applicable. Per 4.1.3a, the CCDF Lead Agency does not provide child care services through grants or contracts in addition to offering certificates.

4.1.4 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)).

Child Care Assistance Program regulation 7 AAC 41.210(10) states that a parent of a child in care is allowed unlimited access to the child and all areas of the child care premises. This requirement is monitored by Child Care Licensing staff while on site for inspections.

4.1.5 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.
 - Restricted based on minimum the number of children in the care of the provider to meet the Fair Labor Standards Act (minimum wage) requirements.

Describe:

The family must have at least 4 children needing care who are not in school at any time during the day.

- Restricted based on the provider meeting a minimum age requirement. (A relative provider must be at least 18 years of age based on the definition of eligible child care provider (98.2).

Describe:

A caregiver hired by the family to provide in-home child care services must be at least 18 years of age.

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

Describe:

A family may be eligible to use in-home care if they have at least one child and all parents of the family work a night shift.

- Restricted to care by relatives.

Describe:

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

Describe:

A family with fewer than four children needing care who are not in school at any time during the day may be eligible to use in-home care if they have at least one child with documented special needs.

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

Describe:

- Other.

Describe:

A family may be eligible to use in-home care if they have at least one child who is younger than 12 months of age.

4.2 Assessing Market Rates and Child Care Costs

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 and/or (2) an 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 model what expected costs would be incurred by child care providers and parents under different cost 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. The MRS or alternative methodology must be developed and conducted no earlier than 2 years before the date of submission of the Plan.

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 how the Lead Agency will consult with the State's 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, up to date data.
- Describe the estimated reporting burden and cost to conduct the approach.

4.2.1 Please identify the methodology(ies) used below to assess child care prices and/or costs.

- MRS
- Alternative methodology.

Describe:

- Both.

Describe:

The State of Alaska, CCDF Lead Agency, Child Care Program Office conducted a Market Rate Survey and alternative methodology simultaneously. The Market Rate Survey involved surveying rates for all licensed providers for each type of care. Specifically, CCPO asked about rates for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school age children in full- and part-month enrollments for licensed centers and licensed family child care homes. Each provider that reported a rate was weighted by the number of children in that type of care before calculating the relevant percentile. For the alternative methodology, CCPO combined information from the Market Rate Survey for each type of care and information from a geographic differential study to set rates for each of the 29 boroughs in Alaska. This involved taking the 15th percentile for the most populous area in Alaska and then multiplying that value by the geographic differential for each area. This geographic differential study is used by other departments and divisions within the state to set payment rates.

4.2.2 Prior to developing and conducting the MRS or alternative methodology, the Lead Agency is required to consult with the (1) 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)).

Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the:

a) State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), emailed a draft of the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report to the Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council (AECCC) via a broadcast for input prior to finalization.

b) Local child care program administrators:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), held a statewide teleconference on November 14, 2017 with CCPO grantees, including Child Care Assistance Program Local Administrators to go over the Market Price Survey (MPS) and address any questions or concerns with the survey. A draft of the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report was provided via an email broadcast to the Local Administrator offices for input prior to finalization.

c) Local child care resource and referral agencies:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), held a statewide teleconference on November 14, 2017 with CCPO grantees, including Child Care Resource and Referral Network staff to go over the Market Price Survey (MPS) and address any questions or concerns with the survey. A draft of the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report was provided via an email broadcast to the Child Care Resource and Referral Network for input prior to finalization.

d) Organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), did not consult with organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors through a formal process

prior to conducting the market price survey or alternative methodology but instead through on-site visits, one-on-one conversations with administrators and staff, quarterly licensing chats with providers; participating in regional Alaska Association for the Education of Young Children conferences, informational meetings on proposed program changes, etc. gathered information to improve upon our last market price survey to better inform program changes, to include rate setting that promotes our philosophy of policies and practices that are child focused, family friendly, fair to providers, staff, and grantees.

e) Other. Describe:

Tribal CCDF grantees: A draft of the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report was provided via an email broadcast to Alaska Tribal CCDF grantees for input prior to finalization.

4.2.3 Describe how the market rate survey is statistically valid and reliable. To be considered valid and reliable, the MRS must represent the child care market, provide complete and current data, use rigorous data collection procedures, reflect geographic variations, and analyze data in a manner that captures other relevant differences. For example, market rate surveys can use administrative data, such as child care resource and referral data, if they are representative of the market. If an alternative methodology, such as cost modeling, is used, demonstrate that the methodology used reliable methods.

All licensed child care providers within the State of Alaska who were in Open/ Active status in December 2017 were sent the 2017 Market Price Survey.

Of the 534 licensed child care providers surveyed, 224 (42%) responded. While this response rate is lower than in previous years, one key difference is that this year's Market Rate Survey was only distributed via email (not by phone or mail). Despite a relatively lower response rate than in previous years, rate information was received for 77% of facility type/region combinations where there was more than 1 provider for a given facility type. This provided us with enough data to calculate rate percentiles and make comparisons across geographic regions and provider types.

Information from Alaska's licensed child care providers was gathered through two processes:

an administrative update by the CCDF Lead Agency, Child Care Program Office (CCPO), child care database and a market price survey. The administrative data update collected the following information from the Integrated Child Care Information System (ICCS), for active licensed child care providers who were participating in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), as well as non-participating providers:

- Provider's prices for a full month and a part month; and
- Per the age groups of: infant; toddler; preschool age; and school age.

The 2017 Market Price Survey collected the following information:

- If the provider is operating at full capacity and if not, reason(s) why;
- Full month and part month enrollment for October 2017;
- Full day and part day attendance on Tuesday, December 5, 2017;
- Wait list information;
- Incentives for reduced prices;
- Registration fee information, including incentives for reduced fees made available to families; and
- The provider's business type.
- Demographic information such as legal name of the provider, administrator or owner's name, mailing address, physical address, telephone number and email.

Providers were sent a letter in advance to inform them of the upcoming survey, and to allow CCPO staff to update provider information in ICCS. Providers were offered one way to respond to the survey which was web-based via Survey Monkey.

Providers who did not take a survey were provided another email reminding them of the 2017 Market Price Survey. CCPO continued to send out reminders to providers throughout the 2017 Market Price Survey.

Analyze data in a manner that captures other relevant differences:

The units of care used for price and state rate comparisons in the provider price tables section of the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report (Report) are full month and part month enrollment prices for licensed: centers; group homes; and homes.

Geographic variation was captured in the MPS by surveying all licensed providers in the state. Additionally, geographic variation was analyzed in the MPS by breaking out the following variables into each of the 29 boroughs in the provider price tables: the Child Care Assistance Rate Region; the number of child care providers who participated in the survey; the number of children in care, by age group, for the month December 2017; and show the providers' price range (Minimum, 25th percentile, 50th percentile (median), 75th percentile and Maximum). Finally, geographic variation is reflected by collecting rate information from 77% of facility type/region combinations where there was more than one provider within a facility type.

4.2.4 Describe how the market rate survey or alternative methodology reflects variations in the price or cost of child care services by:

a) Geographic area (e.g., statewide or local markets). Describe:

Prices from providers in all nine Child Care Assistance Rate Regions, encompassing the entire state, were captured and included in the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report. These nine rate regions include: Anchorage, Fairbanks, Gulf Coast, Interior, Juneau, Matanuska-Susitna Valley, Northern, Southeast, and Southwest.

Prices in the 2017 Market Rate Survey were also analyzed at the borough level. Rate regions combine data from multiple boroughs; however, the CCPO also analyzed this data before combining allowing examination of differences which were unique to an individual borough.

b) Type of provider. Describe:

Tables and figures (charts) included in the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report identify the data by the licensed provider type: center; group home; or home.

c) Age of child. Describe:

Tables and figures (charts) included in the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey

Report break out the data by the age group of the child: infant (birth through 12 months); toddler (13 months through 35 months); preschool age child (36 months through 59 months); and school age child (5 years through 12 years).

d) Describe any other key variations examined by the market rate survey or alternative methodology, such as quality level.

The 2017 Market Rate Survey asked for other qualitative data to better understand Alaska's child care market. A particular area of interest was trying to determine why a provider would choose to operate below the maximum capacity they could be operating at for their licensed child care provider type. Another primary area was collecting the number of enrolled children for a part month and full month which would allow for a better evaluation of needed revisions to Alaska's Child Care Assistance Program Rate Schedule (state subsidy rates). Additionally, we inquired about desired capacity to get a better understanding of the market and to compare where child care providers are operating at capacity.

4.2.5 After conducting the market rate survey or alternative methodology, the Lead Agency must prepare a detailed report containing the results of the MRS or alternative methodology. The detailed report must also include the estimated 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, the States may use other quality indicators (e.g. provider status related to accreditation, pre-K standards, Head Start performance standards, or State defined quality measures.)

Describe how the Lead Agency made the results of the market rate survey or alternative methodology report widely available to the public (98.45(f)(1)). by responding to the questions below.

a) Date of completion of the market rate survey or alternative methodology (must be no earlier than July 1, 2016, and no later than July 1, 2018). 06/26/2018

b) Date the report containing results was made widely available - no later than 30 days after the completion of the report. 06/26/2018

c) Describe how the Lead Agency made the detailed report containing results widely available and provide the link where the report is posted.

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report is available on the CCPO website at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Documents/dpa/programs/ccare/Documents/Resources-Reports/2017-Alaska-Child-Care-Market-Price-Survey-Report.pdf>. On June 27, 2018, the CCPO sent a broadcast out to all licensed child care providers; CCPO grantees; Office of Child Care, Region X staff; Alaska Child Care and Development Fund Tribal Grantees; and Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council notifying them of the location of the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report, on the CCPO website.

d) Describe how the Lead Agency considered stakeholder views and comments in the detailed report.

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), considered stakeholders views by taking into account feedback we have received in regards to the Market Price Survey over the past several years. The CCPO continues to receive feedback that the Market Price Survey is not an accurate reflection of the rate for child care based on geographical location, median income, and cost of living. The CCPO made the decision to conduct an alternative methodology simultaneously with the 2017 Market Price Survey that analyzed data based on geographic differential; cost of living; median income; and cost of living multipliers.

4.3 Setting Payment Rates

The Lead Agency must set CCDF subsidy payment rates, in accordance with the results of the current MRS or alternative methodology, 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 funds. The Lead Agency must re-evaluate its payment rates at least every 3 years.

4.3.1 Provide the base payment rates and percentiles (based on the most recent MRS) for the following categories below. Percentiles are not required if the Lead Agency conducted an alternative methodology only (with pre-approval from ACF), but must be reported if the Lead Agency conducted an MRS alone or in combination with an alternative methodology. 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. Please use the most populous geographic region (area serving highest number of CCDF children) to report base payment rates below, if they are not statewide. Note: If the Lead Agency obtained approval to conduct an alternative methodology, then reporting of percentiles is not required.

a) Infant (6 months), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 900 per monthly unit of time (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)

Percentile of most recent MRS: 11. Actual dollar difference -\$106.00. As described below, although the percentiles that the rates fall at are low, the actual dollar difference between the rates and the 75th percentile are relatively small (< \$200). This pattern may be due to the lower survey response rate that CCPO experienced this year. A lower response rate can translate into a narrower range of possible values.

b) Infant (6 months), full-time licensed FCC home in the most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 700 per monthly unit of time (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)

Percentile of most recent MRS: 22. Actual dollar difference -\$100.00. As described below, although the percentiles that the rates fall at are low, the actual dollar difference between the rates and the 75th percentile are relatively small (< \$200). This pattern may be due to the lower survey response rate that CCPO experienced this year. A lower response rate can translate into a narrower range of possible values.

c) Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 800 per monthly unit of time (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)

Percentile of most recent MRS: 12. Actual dollar difference -\$191.00. As described below, although the percentiles that the rates fall at are low, the actual dollar difference between the rates and the 75th percentile are relatively small (< \$200). This pattern may be due to the lower survey response rate that CCPO experienced this year. A lower

response rate can translate into a narrower range of possible values.

d) Toddler (18 months), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 650 per monthly unit of time (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)

Percentile of most recent MRS: 42. Actual dollar difference -\$125.00. As described below, although the percentiles that the rates fall at are low, the actual dollar difference between the rates and the 75th percentile are relatively small (< \$200). This pattern may be due to the lower survey response rate that CCPO experienced this year. A lower response rate can translate into a narrower range of possible values.

e) Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed center care in the most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 700 per monthly unit of time (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)

Percentile of most recent MRS: 16. Actual dollar difference -\$223.00. As described below, although the percentiles that the rates fall at are low, the actual dollar difference between the rates and the 75th percentile are relatively small (< \$200). This pattern may be due to the lower survey response rate that CCPO experienced this year. A lower response rate can translate into a narrower range of possible values.

f) Preschooler (4 years), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 545 per monthly unit of time (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)

Percentile of most recent MRS: 33. Actual dollar difference -\$155.00. As described below, although the percentiles that the rates fall at are low, the actual dollar difference between the rates and the 75th percentile are relatively small (< \$200). This pattern may be due to the lower survey response rate that CCPO experienced this year. A lower response rate can translate into a narrower range of possible values.

g) School-age child (6 years), full-time licensed center care in most populous geographic region

Rate \$ 745 per monthly unit of time (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

Percentile of most recent MRS: 21. Actual dollar difference -\$135.00. As described below, although the percentiles that the rates fall at are low, the actual dollar difference between the rates and the 75th percentile are relatively small (< \$200). This pattern may be due to the lower survey response rate that CCPO experienced this year. A lower response rate can translate into a narrower range of possible values.

h) School-age child (6 years), full-time licensed FCC care in the most populous

geographic region

Rate \$ 501 per monthly unit of time (e.g., daily, weekly, monthly)

Percentile of most recent MRS: 46. Actual dollar difference -\$50.00. As described below, although the percentiles that the rates fall at are low, the actual dollar difference between the rates and the 75th percentile are relatively small (< \$200). This pattern may be due to the lower survey response rate that CCPO experienced this year. A lower response rate can translate into a narrower range of possible values.

i) Describe how part-time and full-time care were defined and calculated.

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), surveyed providers about both full month and part month care. Full month care is defined as enrollment of 17 through 23 days of care that includes at least one full day of care in a month. Part month care is defined as enrollment that is fewer than 17 days of care in any combination of part or full days in a month or between 17 through 23 part days of care in a month.

Note for a-h above: Actual dollar difference -\$106.00. As described below, although the percentiles that the rates fall at are low, the actual dollar difference between the rates and the 75th percentile are relatively small (< \$200). This pattern may be due to the lower survey response rate that CCPO experienced this year. A lower response rate can translate into a narrower range of possible values.

j) Provide the effective date of the current payment rates (i.e., date of last update based on most recent MRS). Revised 06/13/2017 and effective 10/1/17.

k) Identify the most populous area of the state used to complete the responses above.

Anchorage, Alaska

l) Provide the citation or link, if available, to the payment rates.

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Documents/dpa/programs/ccare/forms/Child-Care-Assistance-Program-Rate-Schedule.pdf>

m) 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)).

Not applicable. Payment rates are set by the CCDF Lead Agency for the entire state.

4.3.2 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).

Check and describe the types of tiered reimbursement or differential rates, if any, the Lead Agency has chosen to implement. In the description of any tiered rates or add-ons, at a minimum, indicate the process and basis used for determining the tiered rates, including if the rates were based on the MRS and/or an alternative methodology, and the amount of the rate. Check all that apply.

Differential rate for *non-traditional hours*.

Describe:

Differential rate for *children with special needs*, as defined by the state/territory.

Describe:

Child care providers providing care to a child with a diagnosed special need may receive supplemental payments (add-ons) through the Alaska Inclusive Child Care Program (Alaska IN!). Alaska IN! is applicable to all provider types participating in the Child Care Assistance Program . The supplemental payment is the child care provider's actual cost associated with providing the additional services specific to the child's special need. The cost is reimbursed based on percentage increments of the cost of care authorized for the child not to exceed 100% of the cost of care authorized.

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:

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:

Differential rate for higher quality, as defined by the state/territory.

Describe:

Other differential rates or tiered rates.

Describe:

Tiered or differential rates are not implemented.

4.4 Summary of Facts Used To Determine That Payment Rates Are Sufficient To Ensure Equal Access

4.4.1 Lead Agencies must certify that CCDF payment rates are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services comparable to those provided by families not receiving CCDF assistance (98.16(a)). Certify that payment rates reported in 4.3.1 are sufficient to ensure equal access by providing the following summary of facts (98.45(b)):

a) Describe how a choice of the full range of providers eligible to receive CCDF is made available; the extent to which eligible child care providers participate in the CCDF system; and any barriers to participation, including barriers related to payment rates and practices.

Information for licensed and legally exempt providers is made available through the Child Care Program Office (CCPO) website as well as through the Child Care Resource and Referral Network referral system. Per the Child Care Services Monthly Report (April 2018), 84% of licensed child care providers are participating in the Child Care Assistance Program. Some barriers to provider participation in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) are:

- Some rural and remote areas throughout Alaska do not have state trooper stations, which conduct fingerprints for the Alaska Background Check Program. In order to participate in the CCAP providers and their caregivers are required to have background checks.
- If a rural and remote area in Alaska lacks internet they are unable to obtain the required health and safety trainings via online classes. This means the provider

would need to either obtain internet access or travel to a location with internet and/or approved in person health and safety trainings.

b) Describe how payment rates are adequate and have been established based on the most recent MRS or alternative methodology . Note: Per the preamble (81 FR 67512), in instances where a MRS or alternative methodology indicates that prices or costs have increased, Lead Agencies must raise their rates as a result.

Alaska's current payment rates were compared to the most recent market rate survey (MRS) conducted in 2017. The adequacy of current payment rates were examined by utilizing a narrow cost calculator. The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), examined the child care assistance rates in Anchorage, the most populous area, by utilizing published child care worker wage data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The following are results from the analysis of the narrow cost calculator:

Infants (full-time, licensed center) are at the 11 percentile of the most recent MRS and are not adequate based on the narrow cost calculator.

Infants (full-time, licensed FCC home) are at the 22 percentile of the most recent MRS and are adequate based on the narrow cost calculator.

Toddlers (full-time, licensed center) are at the 12 percentile of the most recent MRS and are adequate based on the narrow cost calculator.

Toddlers (full-time, licensed FCC home) are at the 42 percentile of the most recent MRS and are adequate based on the narrow cost calculator.

Preschooler (full-time, licensed center) are at the 16 percentile of the most recent MRS and are adequate based on the narrow cost calculator.

Preschooler (full-time, licensed FCC home) are at the 33 percentile of the most recent MRS and are adequate based on the narrow cost calculator.

School-age child (full-time, licensed center) are at the 21 percentile of the most recent MRS and are adequate based on the narrow cost calculator.

School-age child (full-time, licensed FCC home) are at the 46 percentile of the most recent MRS and are adequate based on the narrow cost calculator.

c) Describe how base payment rates enable providers to meet health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements under CCDF.

Alaska's current payment rates, revised February 1, 2017 and effective October 1, 2017, do not reflect the most recent market price survey conducted in 2017. Payment rates are

set based on the findings of the market price survey (MPS). The Child Care Program Office sets rates adequately to reflect the child care market. In addition to the 2017 MPS, the CCPO created a narrow cost calculator for three locations where the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) published child care worker wage information: Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Southeast Non-Metro. For each set of proposed rates and our current rates the CCPO examined whether the rates were adequate in covering total cost to providers. These total costs were derived from the Guidance on Estimating and Reporting the Cost of Child Care, developed by the Early Childhood National Centers. When businesses set child care rates a business should be considering training, health, safety, quality, and staffing requirement costs into the monthly child care rate.

d) Describe how the Lead Agency took the cost of higher quality 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, Pre-K standards, Head Start performance standards, or State defined quality measures).

The Child Care Program Office (CCPO) cannot guarantee businesses are setting rates adequately to include overhead costs of a business, including the cost of higher quality, the CCPO offers the Child Care Grant Program (CCG). CCG supports other efforts to ensure equal access to quality care. The CCPO through the CCG provides funding to eligible licensed child care providers on a monthly basis to enhance their program's quality. CCG funds may be used for child development education and training as well as staff wages and benefits. Licensed child care providers may receive anywhere from \$30-\$50 per child, per month, depending upon their geographical location. In Fiscal Year 2017, the following was reimbursed to programs through the CCG: - \$2,838,694 on staff salaries and wages; - \$13,065 on substitute care; -\$29,652 on supplies, equipment's, and activities for children; -\$10,332 on health and safety costs; and -\$2,275 on child development education and training.

e) 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 funds (98.16 (k))? Check all that apply.

- Limit the maximum co-payment per family.

Describe: .

Family co-payments are based on the family's monthly countable income and family size. The Family Income and Contribution Schedule is based on Alaska's State Median Income with a minimum co-pay amount of \$20 (exception families receiving TANF and children in child protective services through the Office of Children's Services) and a maximum of no more than 10% of the family's monthly countable income.

- 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

- 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 3.1.7.

- Other.

Describe:

f) To support parental choice and equal access to the full range of child care options, 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 CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), requires child care assistance program participating providers to have established rates for their services. Each provider sets their own rates based on their business need. Child care assistance program (CCAP) regulation 7 AAC 41.245 prohibits participating providers from charging a CCAP participating family a higher rate than the rate charged to other families for the same service. The CCDF Lead Agency certifies 98% of all children participating in the CCAP are in licensed child care thereby

ensuring equal access and affordability.

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.

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), will collect more data to support why we allow providers to continue this practice in preparation for the next plan cycle. Current information available includes...

Full Month Rates above the State Rate:

Licensed Centers

Infant - 42% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$84

Toddler - 38% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of

\$116
Preschool - 48% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$122

School age - 36% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$71

Licensed Group Home

Infant - 27% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$83

Toddler - 11% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$116

Preschool - 20% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$86
School age - 13% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$99

Licensed Home

Infant - 43% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$73

Toddler - 41% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$70

Preschool - 47% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$89

School aged - 37% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$96

Part Month Above the State Rate

Licensed Centers

Infant - 43% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$38
Toddler - 40% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$84
Preschool - 53% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$48
School age - 58% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$52

Licensed Group Home

Infant - no provider rates reported above the state rate
Toddler - no provider rates reported above the state rate
Preschool - 12% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$92
School Age - 17% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$74

Licensed Home

Infant - 50% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$47
Toddler - 33% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$60
Preschool - 39% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$71
School Age - 38% of the provider's rates are above the state rate by an average of \$77

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 family's co-payment is not connected to the provider's charges. Alaska updated the *Family Income and Contribution Schedule* and the *Child Care Assistance Program Rate Schedule* effective October 1, 2017 which resulted in many families experiencing an increase in their co-payment amount. Updating the *Child Care Assistance Program Rate Schedule* at the same time helped offset some of the increase to some families as not all rates were increased.

g) Describe how Lead Agencies' payment practices described in 4.5 support equal access to a range of providers.

In the April 2018 Child Care Services Monthly Report, Table 5: Number of children with

an authorization by provider type and CCAP rate region shows of the 3,435 children authorized care, 2,459 (72%) children were in Licensed Center care; 290 (8%) children were in Licensed Group Home care; 630 (18%) children were in Licensed Home care; 41 (1%) children were in Approved Relative care; and 15 (less than 1%) children were in In-home care. In summary, 98.3% of children participating in the Child Care Assistance Program were in licensed care, thereby demonstrating participating families have equal access to a range of providers. Request for payment practices are fair for all provider types and include payment of registration fees to allow greater access to more providers. In addition, child care providers receive payment within 21 days based on unit of care authorized and actual attendance, and authorizing care on a full-month/part-month provides stability for providers. The CCPO issues payment for sick days as well as notice days.

h) Describe how and on what factors the Lead Agency differentiates payment rates. Check all that apply.

Geographic area.

Describe:

Child Care Assistance Program has nine rate regions based on the 2007 Market Price Survey data: Anchorage; Fairbanks; Gulf Coast; Interior; Juneau; Matanuska-Susitna Valley; Northern; Southeast; and Southwest. Payments rates in the 2017 Market Rate Survey were also analyzed at the borough level. Rate regions combine data from multiple boroughs; however, the CCPO also analyzed this data before combining allowing examination of differences which were unique to an individual borough.

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Documents/dpa/programs/ccare/forms/Child-Care-Assistance-Program-Rate-Schedule.pdf>

Type of provider.

Describe:

Child Care Assistance Program payment rates based on type of provider, which are: licensed center or military center; licensed family group home; licensed home; and approved relative or in-home care.

Age of child.

Describe:

Child Care Assistance Program payment rates are also based on the age of the child which include: infant birth through 12 months; toddler 13 months through 35 months; preschool age 36 months through 59 months; and school age 5 years through 12 years.

Quality level.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

i) Describe any additional facts that the Lead Agency considered in determining its payment rates to ensure equal access. Check all that apply and describe:

Payment rates are set at the 75th percentile benchmark or higher of the most recent MRS.

Describe:

Based on the approved alternative methodology, payments rates ensure equal access.

Describe:

Feedback from parents, including parent surveys or parental complaints.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

On October 1, 2017, CCPO conducted an administrative rate update. An administrative update is when the CCPO verifies provider rates. After this rate update, CCPO found that over 60% of providers changed their rates. When evaluating the most recent Market Rate Survey, we considered the impact that the state's payment rates has on the cost of care for private pay children.

4.5 Payment Practices and the 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(l)(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(l)(3)).

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(l)(4) through (6); 658E(c)(2)(S)(ii); 98.45(l)(4); 98.45(l)(5); 98.45(l)(6)).

4.5.1 Certify by identifying and describing the payment practices below that the Lead Agency has implemented for all CCDF child care providers.

- a) Ensure the timeliness of payments by either (Lead Agency to implement at least one of the following):

Paying prospectively prior to the delivery of services.

Describe the policy or procedure.

Paying within no more than 21 calendar days of the receipt of a complete invoice for services.

Describe the policy or procedure.

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), processes payment to providers once a complete Request for Payment has been received. The deadline to submit a Request for Payment is on or before the last day of the month immediately following the month in which child care services were provided. Within 21 calendar days of receiving a complete and acceptable Request for Payment the CCPO and Designees process the billing for payment to the provider.

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):

Paying based on a child's enrollment rather than attendance.

Describe the policy or procedure.

Providing full payment if a child attends at least 85 percent of the authorized time.

Describe the policy or procedure.

Providing full payment if a child is absent for five or fewer days in a month.

Describe the policy or procedure.

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.

When care is authorized as a full or part month and the child only attends between 1 and 5 days payment is calculated at the part month rate. When care is authorized as a part month and the child attends at least 1 day, payment is made at the part month

rate. When care is authorized as a full month and the child is in care at least 6 days payment is calculated at the full month rate. Units of care are authorized as enrollment on a full month or part month basis when 17 through 23 full and/or part days of care are needed in the month. When a family needs full or part days of care, in addition to an enrollment authorization, the full or part day units are authorized in addition to the full or part month.

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).

Units of care are authorized as enrollment on a full month or part month basis when 17 through 23 full and/or part days of care are needed in the month. When a family needs full or part days of care, in addition to an enrollment authorization, the full or part day units are authorized in addition to the full or part month. When care is authorized as a full or part month and the child only attends between 1 and 5 days payment is calculated at the part month rate. When care is authorized as a part month and the child attends at least 1 day, payment is made at the part month rate. When care is authorized as a full month and the child is in care at least 6 days payment is calculated at the full month rate. Units of care are: Part day - up to and including 5 hours of care in a day; Full day - 5 hours and 1 minute up to and including 10 hours of care in a day; Part month - fewer than 17 days of care in any combination of part or full days; or between 17 through 23 part days of care in a month; Full month - between 17 through 23 full days of care in a month; or between 17 through 23 days of care in a combination of full days and part days in a month

ii. Paying for reasonable mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents.

Describe the policy or procedure.

The Child Care Assistance Program will pay a maximum registration fee payment of \$50 per child, per licensed provider, per calendar year.

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, and the dispute-resolution process. Describe:

Each child care provider applying for participation in the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) completes a Child Care Provider Rates and Responsibilities CC12 form which includes acknowledgement by the provider they will follow the requirements of CCAP regulations 7 AAC 41, to include the family being issued a Child Care Assistance Authorization document prior to the provider requesting payment for services. In accordance with CCAP regulations 7 AAC 41.025, 7 AAC 41.035, 7 AAC 41.040, 7 AAC 41.245, 7 AAC 41.250, payment will be made to providers as long as a Child Care Assistance Authorization document has been issued to the family and the provider and the child attends at least one day in the service month, except that a provider will be paid for the required 10 day notice timeframe if the child did not attend during the month. If an adjustment or non-payment determination is made, written notice is given to the provider describing their right to appeal the determination. The Child Care Assistance Authorization document includes information regarding an annual registration fee of up to \$50 being allowed to be paid to licensed providers in addition to the program benefit authorized; the parent is responsible for any costs a provider charges over the authorized rates in addition to the family's co-pay.

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:

The same or following day the family is determined eligible and care is authorized, or during the family's eligibility period if care is changed/increased, the family's identified child care provider is sent a copy of the family's Child Care Assistance Authorization document which includes the timeframe and level of care authorized. A family's authorized care can only be reduced with timely adverse action at which time the provider receives a copy of the modified Child Care Assistance Authorization document.

f) The Lead Agency has a timely appeal and resolution process for payment inaccuracies and disputes. Describe:

If a provider discovers an error they may contact the child care assistance office responsible for processing the payment. The incorrect payment process is followed to clearly document the reason for additional payment to be made to the provider. If the error resulted in an overpayment of \$99 or less no recoupment action is taken. If a provider disagrees with a decision made by the Child Care Program Office or child care assistance office they may request a hearing within 30 days of the date of the decision. The Alaska Department of Administration, Office of Administrative Hearings conducts the hearings for the division and issues a final agency action. If a provider is not satisfied with the decision of the hearing authority they may seek judicial review of the final decision.

g) Other. Describe:

Not applicable.

4.5.2 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:

4.6 Supply-Building Strategies to Meet the Needs of Certain Populations

Lead Agencies are required to develop and implement strategies to increase the supply of and to improve the quality of child care services for 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 (658 E(c)(2)(M); 98.16 (x)).

4.6.1 Lead Agencies must identify shortages in the supply of high-quality child care providers. List the data sources used to identify shortages, and describe the method of tracking progress to support equal access and parental choice.

In licensed family child care.

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report is available on the CCPO website at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ccare/default.aspx>.

In licensed child care centers.

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), the 2017 Alaska Child Care Market Price Survey Report is available on the CCPO website at <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/ccare/default.aspx>.

Other.

McDowell Group created a data dashboard describing the unmet need for children younger than 6 years old, broken out by borough. This dashboard presents the estimated number of children that are in care more generally, not just in licensed care. When considering unmet need, the number of children that are not in need of care, the number of children that are in licensed care, the number of children that are in approved care (unlicensed), and the number of children that are in other forms of informal care are all subtracted from the total number of children in the region. This method provides an estimate of how many slots for any type of care are needed.

National Child Care Aware has created a desert map for infants and toddlers. One assumption of this map is that all infants and toddlers in an area require licensed care:

<http://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/research/mappingthegap/alaska-mapping-the-gap/>

In addition to this desert map, as part of the 2017 Market Rate Survey, CCPO analyzed waitlists for infants and toddlers to get an estimate of how many children are interested in, but not yet receiving, licensed care.

4.6.2 Describe what method(s) is used to increase supply and to improve quality for the following.

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

Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3).

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers the Child Care Grant Program for licensed child care providers to receive additional financial supports for staff salaries and benefits, supplies and equipment, training and professional development, and other health and safety services.

Family child care networks.

Describe:

Start-up funding.

Describe:

The Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread has a quality initiative which includes start up funding for new providers.

Technical assistance support.

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread offer technical assistance to anyone interested in becoming a licensed child care provider.

Recruitment of providers.

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread coordinate to offer introduction to licensing information and other services to recruit new child care providers in underserved areas.

Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2).

Describe:

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

Describe:

Accreditation supports.

Describe:

Child Care Health Consultation.

Describe:

Mental Health Consultation.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

4.6.2 Describe what method(s) is used to increase supply and to improve quality for the following.

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

Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3).

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers the Child Care Grant Program for licensed child care providers providing care for infants and toddlers to receive additional financial supports for staff salaries and benefits, supplies and equipment, training and professional development, and other health and safety services.

Family child care networks.

Describe:

Start-up funding.

Describe:

The Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread has a quality initiative which includes start up funding for new providers.

Technical assistance support.

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread offer technical assistance to anyone interested in becoming a licensed child care provider.

Recruitment of providers.

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread coordinate to offer introduction to licensing information and other services to recruit new child care providers for infants and toddler care.

Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2) .

Describe:

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

Describe:

Accreditation supports.

Describe:

Child Care Health Consultation.

Describe:

Mental Health Consultation.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

4.6.2 Describe what method(s) is used to increase supply and to improve quality for the following.

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

Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3).

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers the Child Care Grant Program for licensed child care providers providing care for children with disabilities to receive additional financial supports for staff salaries and benefits, supplies and equipment, training and professional development, and other health and safety services.

Family child care networks.

Describe:

Start-up funding.

Describe:

The Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread has a quality initiative which includes start up funding for new providers.

Technical assistance support.

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread offer technical assistance to anyone interested in becoming a licensed child care provider.

Recruitment of providers.

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread coordinate to offer introduction to licensing information and other services to recruit new child care providers for

children with disabilities.

Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2).

Describe:

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

Describe:

Accreditation supports.

Describe:

Child Care Health Consultation.

Describe:

Mental Health Consultation.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers the Alaska IN Program to offer supplemental financial support to licensed child care providers to meet the needs of children with disabilities while in care.

4.6.2 Describe what method(s) is used to increase supply and to improve quality for the following.

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

Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3).

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), offers the Child Care Grant Program for licensed child care providers to receive additional financial supports for staff salaries and benefits, supplies and equipment, training and

professional development, and other health and safety services.

Family child care networks.

Describe:

Start-up funding.

Describe:

The Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread has a quality initiative which includes start up funding for new providers.

Technical assistance support.

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread offer technical assistance to anyone interested in becoming a licensed child care provider.

Recruitment of providers.

Describe:

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network, thread coordinate to offer introduction to licensing information and other services to recruit new child care providers with non traditional hours.

Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2) .

Describe:

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

Describe:

Accreditation supports.

Describe:

Child Care Health Consultation.

Describe:

Mental Health Consultation.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

4.6.2 Describe what method(s) is used to increase supply and to improve quality for the following.

e) Other. Check and describe all that apply:

Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.3).

Describe:

Family child care networks.

Describe:

Start-up funding.

Describe:

Technical assistance support.

Describe:

Recruitment of providers.

Describe:

Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.2).

Describe:

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

Describe:

Accreditation supports.

Describe:

Child Care Health Consultation.

Describe:

Mental Health Consultation.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

Not applicable.

4.6.3 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.

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

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), uses borough estimates of unemployment data from Alaska's Department of Labor and Workforce Development and borough estimates of poverty status data from the American Community Survey (Table S1701 - 2012-2016 5-Year Estimates) to define areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment.

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 high-quality programs

The CCDF Lead Agency, the Child Care Program Office (CCPO), uses strategies such

as grants and contracts, technical assistance, start-up funding, and recruitment and retention efforts to increase access to high quality child care in areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment.