



# **Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) ACF-700 and Other Tribal CCDF Reporting Requirements: Frequently Asked Questions Technical Bulletin #11r-V6 June 2023**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this Bulletin is to clarify questions and issues related to the Tribal Grantee reporting requirements, and to address recent changes to the Tribal Annual Child Care Report (ACF-700). The Office of Child Care (OCC) has consolidated the ACF-700 data report, Tribal Supplemental Narrative, and American Rescue Plan (ARP) Stabilization Grant funding into one cohesive report with an Introduction and three other parts. In the Introduction, Tribal Grantees indicate their use of other funds in their subsidy program, which families and children are included in their report and for small allocation Grantees whether they only supported quality activities and did not provide direct services. Part 1 of the ACF-700 report captures administrative data about the number of families and children served. Part 2 of the report contains specific questions that gather programmatic information about Tribal quality activities. Part 3 captures information about the ARP Stabilization awards made to providers as well as information about the providers supported through these awards. The new report format will allow OCC to easily generate and analyze aggregate data, thereby giving OCC a more comprehensive understanding of Tribal program activities.

Submission of annual reports is a requirement for all Grantees who receive Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) dollars. Additional information for Tribal Grantees (referred to as “Grantees” for the purposes of this document) can also be found in Technical Bulletins #12, #13, #14, and #17 on the Office of Child Care (OCC) website (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/current-technical-bulletins>).

This Bulletin addresses some of the most frequently asked questions about reporting responsibilities and processes received by the Child Care Automated Reporting System (CARS) Technical Assistance (TA) Support Team. Information summarized in this Bulletin is grouped into six sections which include references to related on-line resources:

- Reporting Requirements
- Report Preparation and Submission
- Specific ACF-700 Data Elements
- Common Reporting Errors
- ACF-700 Quality Assurance
- Resources for Additional Help

## **II. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

**Question:** *What is the Child Care Automated Reporting System (CARS)?*

**Answer:** OCC is modernizing the way in which tribal Grantees submit child care data. The Child Care Automated Reporting System (CARS) is the new reporting system where Grantees

will enter all required reports (ACF-700 and ACF-118a)

**Question:** *Exactly what reports do I have to submit?*

**Answer:** Following the award of a CCDF grant, Grantees must submit two different reports each year. First, Grantees must submit a financial report (ACF-696T), which describes expenditures of the grant funds (*NOTE: this report is NOT submitted in CARS*). Second, Grantees must submit all four parts of the ACF-700 report, which summarize data about: the children and families served, services provided, Tribal program activities, and ARP Stabilization Grants awarded. Reports represent activities that have taken place throughout the fiscal year (October 1 – September 30). Both reports are due by the end of December. CCDF Tribal Grantees with an approved Pub. L. 102-477 Plan are the only exception to these reporting requirements and are not required to submit the ACF-700 report.

Additional guidance: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/reporting>

**Question:** *Is there a specific form that I have to use to submit the reports?*

**Answer:** Financial information must be entered into the ACF-696T form. The ACF-696T report form and submission instructions may be found at:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/acf-696t>. Program data for the ACF-700 and ACF-118a must be entered into the [Child Care Automated Reporting System \(CARS\)](#). Additional information about the ACF-700 program report maybe found at:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/acf-700-tribal-annual-report>.

### III. REPORT PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

**Question:** Where and how do I submit my reports?

**Answer:** All four parts of the ACF-700 report are submitted via the CARS site (<https://cars.acf.hhs.gov>).

Information on how to submit the financial reports (ACF-696T) can be found online (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/acf-696t>).

	Financial Report	Data Report
Form Name	ACF-696T	ACF-700 (Introduction, Part 1, Part 2, and Part 3)
Due Date	90 days after the end of the fiscal year	By December 31
Report Frequency	Once annually	Once annually
Submission Method	OLDC web-based submission	CARS web-based submission

Regional OCC Staff: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/contact-information/office-child-care-regional-program-managers>  
CARS TA Support: [CARS@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:CARS@acf.hhs.gov)  
CARS site: <https://cars.acf.hhs.gov>.

**Question:** *How do I submit the ACF-700 online?*

**Answer:** The Tribal Reporting page (<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/acf-700-tribal-annual-report>) on the OCC's website has information about submitting the ACF-700 report. You will need to create an account in the CARS site in order to access, edit, and submit the ACF-700 report. If you have any questions or issues setting up your account, please email the CARS TA Team at [CARS@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:CARS@acf.hhs.gov) or call 1-877-249-9117. Once you have an account in CARS, you can use that same account every year. You do not have to request a new username and password annually. However, the CARS accounts require you to sign in and change your password every 60 days to avoid account deactivation. If you do not access CARS for more than 365 days, your account will be deleted and you will be required to create a new account to access CARS.

**Question:** *Some Grantees use the "Child Care Data Tracker" to prepare their ACF-700 report. What is the Tracker?*

**Answer:** The *Child Care Data Tracker (Tracker)* is software that OCC developed and provides to Tribal Grantees to help them record and manage the information that is required for the preparation of Part 1 of the ACF-700 report. The *Tracker* is a case management tool that allows Grantees to maintain case-level information about the families and children they serve and the services they provide. In addition to automatically generating Part 1 of the ACF-700 report from the family and provider records you have entered, the *Tracker* functions include preparation of vouchers/certificates, preparation of mailing labels, and generation of a variety of other management reports.

If you wish to use the *Tracker*, email the CARS TA team at [CARS@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:CARS@acf.hhs.gov).

Additional information about the *Tracker* may be found at:  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/child-care-data-tracker>.

**Question:** *Do I have to use the Tracker?*

**Answer:** The use of the *Tracker* software is not required. Grantees decide how they will best be able to maintain all the information that is necessary for calculating the annual summary information about the families and children they serve, and the services they provide. It is important to note that even though the ACF-700 is an annual report that is due only one time each year, it relies on information that is collected throughout the year and calculated on a monthly basis. Using the *Tracker* can greatly facilitate this process because it does the required calculations for you.

If you have a smaller program and have another case management system in place, but not one that easily calculates the ACF-700, there are excel spreadsheets that help organize the required data for each element in Parts 1 and 3. If you would like to utilize these spreadsheets,

please reach out to [CARS@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:CARS@acf.hhs.gov) to obtain a copy.

#### IV. SPECIFIC ACF-700 DATA ELEMENTS

**Question:** *Which children and families should be reported on the ACF-700?*

**Answer:** Children and families should be counted if they meet CCDF eligibility requirements and receive direct child care services paid for at least partially by Tribal CCDF funds. Direct child care services may be provided through a certificate or voucher, a grant or contract with a child care provider for services, or in a tribally-operated center with operational costs funded by CCDF. Children and families should not be counted if the CCDF grant paid only for quality activities or indirect activities, like improving the nutritional value of lunches, training staff, or teaching reading skills. In these cases, CCDF did not pay for direct child care services.

If the direct child care services are partially funded by Tribal CCDF and partially funded by another source (such as non-CCDF Tribal funding), these children and families should still be reported on the ACF-700. Also, if the Lead Agency is unable to determine from the larger population, which children were served with CCD funds, they should report the larger population on the ACF-700 report (as long as they meet CCDF eligibility requirements.) In either case, the Tribe should indicate the use of non-CCDF funds and identify the funding source(s) in the “Introduction” of the ACF-700 report.

**Question:** *For Element 3, how do I report a child’s age during the reporting period?*

**Answer:** The age of the child is reported as of the end of the report period (i.e. the age of the child on September 30 of the fiscal year) **or** the date the child exits from the CCDF program.

**Question:** *For Element 3, which line do I use if a child is one year old?*

**Answer:** All children receiving services fit into one and only one age category. Note that the categories are intended to be non-overlapping. The first category of 0 up to 1 year does not include a child who is exactly 1 year old. A child who is exactly 1 year old should be counted in category 3b (1 year up to 2 years). Likewise, a child who is exactly 13 years old should **not** be counted in either category 3g or 3h, but in category 3i (13 years and older).

**Question:** *For Element 2, how do I record information if a child is receiving care in more than one type of program?*

**Answer:** OCC collapsed some of the reporting categories beginning with the FY2021 report. For each care-type category, you should count the total number of children receiving care regardless of whether that care is full-time or only part-time. For example, one child may receive care in a center from 8:00-3:00 (7 hours) and receive care from a non-relative family home provider from 3:00-6:00 (3 hours). This child should be counted on both Row 2d and Row 2e.

When you record information about children receiving care in more than one care type, the rows may not add across to equal the total on Row 2. The total of Rows 2a – 2e should be equal to or greater than the Total reported for Row 2. **The Total Number of Children**

**Served for Element #2** should represent an **unduplicated** count of the number of children served in each age group meaning that each child should be counted only once in this row, even if they are reported in multiple care types.

**Question:** *For Element 4, which line do I use if a parent is **both** working and in a training program?*

**Answer:** Effective with the FY2021 report, OCC added a new response category to capture the number of children who received care because the parents worked **AND** were in a training/educational program. Children who fall into this category should be reported on line #4d.

**Question:** *For Element 6, how do I report the CCDF subsidy amount if we are operating our own child care program? We really don't "pay" ourselves for child care in the traditional sense.*

**Answer:** You can calculate and report the subsidy amount that your program spends for direct child care services for each CCDF-eligible child in your Tribally-operated center. Line 4 in the ACF-696T form requires you to indicate how much of your mandatory, discretionary, and base amount funds you have spent for direct child care services. This should include any CCDF COVID-19 Supplemental Funds. The total of these numbers from the ACF-696T report can serve as the basis for your calculation. See the *ACF- 700 Report Guide* for detailed guidance. It is likely that you will have to coordinate with your fiscal staff to obtain accurate numbers. Technical Bulletin #14: *Reporting Clarifications for Tribally Operated Centers* provides additional reporting guidance specifically for Tribal Grantees operating their own Child Care Center.

ACF-700 Report Guide: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/report/acf-700-tribal-annual-report>

696T Report Guidance: [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/report/acf-696t-financial-report \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/report/acf-696t-financial-report (hhs.gov)).

Technical Bulletin #14: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/training-technical-assistance/current-technical-bulletins>

## V. COMMON REPORTING ERRORS

**Question:** *Is Element 4 (number of children receiving child care services based on reason for care) a count of children or a count of families?*

**Answer:** Element 4 is a count of **children**, not families.

**Question:** *Is Element 7 (number of children served by different types of payment to providers) a count of children or a count of families?*

**Answer:** Element 7 is a count of **children**, not families.

**Question:** *What values must add up on the ACF-700 form?*

**Answer:** There are several categories of numbers that must equal one another when they are added up. If the numbers aren't equal, it is likely that some children were either counted twice or were left out. Specific data checks are detailed below.

**Elements 4a through 4e, (total # children receiving services by reason for care) = Element 2b**

All children should be receiving services for one of five reasons, so these five numbers should equal the total number of children served as reported on line 2. Note that the counts are **children** and not families. If a family has four children, three of whom are receiving services because the parent is working, these **three** children should be included in the counts for Element 4a. The child not receiving subsidized services should not be counted anywhere in the ACF-700 form.

EXAMPLE	(A) TOTAL
1. Total number of families that received child care services this fiscal year:	75
2. Total number of children that received services this fiscal year:	<b>121</b>
4a. Number of children who received child care services <b>Because:</b> Their parent(s) worked	80
4b. Number of children who received child care services <b>Because:</b> Their parent(s) were in training or an education program	26
4c. Number of children who received child care services <b>Because:</b> Child received or needed protective services	5
4d. Number of children who received child care services <b>Because:</b> Their parent(s) worked AND were in training/educational program	10
4e. Number of children who received child care services <b>Because:</b> Program has implemented categorical eligibility and employment or training status is not an eligibility criterion	0

**Elements 7a through 7d (total # children receiving services by payment type) = Element 2**

All children are served by providers whose payments fall into one of the four payment types reported on lines 7a-d. Note that the counts are of **children** and not families.

EXAMPLE	(A) TOTAL
1. Total number of families that received child care services this fiscal year:	75
2. Total number of children that received services this fiscal year:	<b>125</b>
7a. Number of children served by payment type this fiscal year: Grant/contract with provider	17
7b. Number of children served by payment type this fiscal year: Certificate or voucher to parent and/or provider	98
7c. Number of children served by payment type this fiscal year: Cash payment to parent	10
7d. Number of children served by payment type this fiscal year: Tribally-operated center	0

## VI. ACF-700 QUALITY ASSURANCE

It is the responsibility of each Tribal Grantee to ensure that the information being reported on all parts of the ACF-700 report accurately represents the families and children you serve, the providers you pay, and the services your CCDF grant supports. Each Program Administrator should review the Introduction, Part 1: Administrative Data, Part 2: Tribal Narrative, and Part 3: ARP Stabilization Grants for completion and accuracy prior to submitting the report to OCC. Some questions to ask yourself as you review your report include:

- Is every field complete?
- Have you answered the right question –i.e., counted children, families, or providers as specified?
- Is every number a whole number (no decimals or fractions)? Round up or down as appropriate.
- Are the counts for Elements #1 and #2 for Part 1 unduplicated counts?
- Are the numbers entered on the right row?
- Have you calculated your averages correctly? Remember most averages should represent one child for one month. Part 3 requires averages for the Stabilization Grants awarded.
- Does the report make sense? Does the information seem to accurately represent your program activities over the past year?
- For the Narrative, have you responded to all questions and provided sufficient details in the describe boxes?
- For Part 3: ARP Stabilization Awards, have you calculated the averages correctly?

The information you provide to OCC becomes a part of the biennial *Report to Congress* – an official document which is used to help guide policy decisions and budgetary considerations. It is important that the story you tell about your CCDF child care program is accurate.

## VII. RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL HELP

If you have other questions or need more information about the ACF-700 report or the *Child Care Data Tracker* software, there are two primary resources for additional help – your Regional Office Child Care Program Manager, and the Child Care Automated Reporting System (CARS) TA Team).

The Office of Child Care (OCC) is represented by staff in each of the ten administrative regions across the country. You should contact your Regional Office if you have questions regarding your Child Care program policy or operations. Contact information for the **Regional Offices** can be found on the OCC website: [Office of Child Care Regional Program Managers | The Administration for Children and Families \(hhs.gov\)](#).

The CARS TA Team works with the OCC to provide technical assistance to all of the Tribal, Territory, and State CCDF Grantees with matters related to the required CCDF data reporting. You can reach **the CARS TA Team** Monday – Friday, 9:00 am- 6:00 pm prevailing Eastern Time by:

Phone (toll-free): 1-877-249-9117

E-mail: [CARS@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:CARS@acf.hhs.gov)

