

OMB Control No: 0970-0517

Expiration date: 12/31/2024

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Quality Progress Report (QPR)

For

Montana

FFY 2022

QPR Status: Accepted as of 2023-02-10 22:24:40 GMT

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from states and territories (hereafter referred to as lead agencies) to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services.

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.

The contents of this document do not have the force and effect of law and are not meant to bind the public in any way. This document is intended only to provide clarity to the public regarding existing requirements under the law or agency policies.

QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

The Quality Progress Report (QPR) collects information from lead agencies to describe investments to improve the quality of care available for children from birth to age 13. This report meets the requirements in the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 for lead agencies to submit an annual report that describes how quality funds were expended, including the activities funded and the measures used to evaluate progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services. Lead agencies are also required to report on their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) quality improvement investments through the CCDF Plan, which collects information on the proposed quality activities for a three-year period; and through the ACF-696, which collects quarterly expenditure data on quality activities.

The annual data provided by the QPR will be used to describe how lead agencies are spending a significant investment per year to key stakeholders, including Congress, federal, state and territory administrators, providers, parents, and the public.

Specifically, this report will be used to:

- Ensure accountability and transparency for the use of CCDF quality funds, including a set-aside for quality infant and toddler care and activities funded by American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act
- Track progress toward meeting state- and territory-set indicators and benchmarks for improvement of child care quality based on goals and activities described in CCDF Plans; and
- Understand efforts in progress towards all child care settings meeting the developmental needs of children
- Inform federal technical assistance efforts and decisions regarding strategic use of quality funds.

What Period Must Be Included: All sections of this report cover the federal fiscal year activities (October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022), unless otherwise stated. Data should reflect the cumulative totals for the fiscal year being reported, unless otherwise stated.

What Data Should Lead Agencies Use: Lead agencies may use data collected by other government and nongovernment agencies (e.g., CCR&R agencies or other TA providers) in addition to their own data as appropriate. We recognize that lead agencies may not have all of the data requested initially but expect progress towards increased data capacity. The scope of this report covers quality improvement activities funded at least in part by CCDF in support of

CCDF activities. Lead agencies must describe their progress in meeting their stated goals for improving the quality of child care as reported in their FFY 2022-2024 CCDF Plan.

How is the QPR Organized?

The first section of the QPR gathers basic data on the population of providers in the state or territory and goals for quality improvement and glossary of relevant terms. The rest of the report is organized according to the ten authorized uses of quality funds specified in the CCDBG Act of 2014:

- 1) Support the training and professional development of the child care workforce
- 2) Improve the development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines
- 3) Develop, implement, or enhance a quality rating improvement system for child care providers
- 4) Improve the supply and quality of child care for infants and toddlers
- 5) Establish or expand a lead agency wide system of child care resource and referral services
- 6) Support compliance with lead agency requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety
- 7) Evaluate the quality of child care programs in the state or territory, including how programs positively impact children
- 8) Support providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- 9) Support the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- 10) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry.

The Office of Child Care (OCC) recognizes that quality funds may have been used to address the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. These activities should be reflected in the relevant sections of the QPR.

Reporting Activities Related to ARP Act Child Care Stabilization Grants

The ARP Act included approximately \$24 billion for child care stabilization grants, representing an important opportunity to stabilize the child care sector and do so in a way that builds back a stronger child care system that supports the developmental and learning needs of children, meets parents' needs and preferences with equal access to high-quality child care, and supports a professionalized workforce that is fairly and appropriately compensated for the essential skilled work that they do. Lead agencies must spend stabilization funds as subgrants to

qualified child care providers to support the stability of the child care sector during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Please refer to the information memorandum [ARP Act Child Care Stabilization Grants](#) (CCDF-ACF-IM-2021-02) for further guidance on the child care stabilization grants made available through the ARP Act.

While the OCC has established a new data collection form, the ACF-901 – American Rescue Plan (ARP) Stabilization Grants Provider-Level Data, as the primary data collection mechanism for reporting related to ARP stabilization grants, Section 13 of the QPR asks about activities related to stabilization grants made possible through ARP funding. The OCC will inform lead agencies if the data reported through the ACF-901 is complete enough to warrant skipping Section 13 of the QPR. The following information is requested in Section 13:

- If the lead agency ran more than one grant program;
- How stabilization grants were used to support workforce compensation; and
- Methods to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse when providing stabilization grants

Section 13 should be used to report on ARP Stabilization Grants ONLY. Other child care sustainability or stabilization grant programs established or ongoing using other funding mechanisms (i.e., CCDF or other supplemental funding e.g., CARES, CRRSA, ARP Supplemental Discretionary Funds) should be reported in Section 11.

When is the QPR Due to ACF?

The QPR will be due to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) by the designated lead agency no later than December 31, 2022.

Glossary of Terms

The following terms are used throughout the QPR. These definitions can also be found in section 98.2 in the CCDBG Act of 2014. For any term not defined, please use the lead agency definition of terms to complete the QPR.

Center-based child care provider means a provider licensed or otherwise authorized to provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a non-residential setting, unless in care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)' work. Associated terms include "child care centers" and "center-based programs."

Director means a person who has primary responsibility for the daily operations and management for a child care provider, which may include a family child care provider, and which may serve children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

Family child care provider means one or more individuals who provide child care services for fewer than 24 hours per day per child in a private residence other than the child’s residence, unless care in excess of 24 hours is due to the nature of the parent(s)’ work. Associated terms include “family child care homes.”

In-home child care provider means an individual who provides child care services in the child’s own home.

License-exempt means facilities that are not required to meet the definition of a facility required to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of “licensing or regulatory requirements.” Associated terms include “legally exempt” and “legally operating without regulation.”

Licensed means a facility required by the state to meet the CCDF section 98.2 definition of “licensing or regulatory requirements,” which explains that the facility meets “requirements necessary for a provider to legally provide child care services in a state of locality, including registration requirements established under state, local or tribal law.”

Programs refer generically to all activities under the CCDF, including child care services and other activities pursuant to §98.50 as well as quality activities pursuant to §98.43.

Provider means the entity providing child care services.

Staffed family child care network means a group of associated family child care providers who pool funds to share some operating costs and to pay for at least one staff person who helps the providers to manage their businesses and enhance quality.

Teacher means a lead teacher, teacher, teacher assistant or teacher aide who is employed by a child care provider for compensation on a regular basis, or a family child care provider, and whose responsibilities and activities are to organize, guide and implement activities in a group or individual basis, or to assist a teacher or lead teacher in such activities, to further the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of children from birth to kindergarten entry and children in school-age child care.

1) Overview

To gain an understanding of the availability of child care in the state or territory, please provide the following information on the total number of child care providers. Please enter N/A when necessary.

1.1 State or Territory Child Care Provider Population

Enter the total number of child care providers that operated in the state or territory as of September 30, 2022. These counts should include all child care providers, not just those serving children receiving CCDF subsidies. Please enter N/A when necessary.

Licensed center-based programs 307

N/A. Describe:

License exempt center-based programs 0

N/A. Describe: **Montana does not have license exempt center-based programs.**

Licensed family child care homes 593

N/A. Describe:

License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) 117

N/A. Describe:

In-home (care in the child's own home) 27

N/A. Describe:

Other. Explain:

1.2 Goals for Quality Improvement

Based on Question 7.1.2 from the FFY2022-2024 CCDF State and Territory Plan, please report progress on the lead agency's overarching goals for quality improvement during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. Include any significant areas of progress that were not anticipated in the Plan as well. For each goal listed, briefly describe the improvement with specific examples or numeric targets where possible. **Our three Early Childhood Assessors have returned to in-person, formal ERS, PAS, and BAS assessments with the health and safety restrictions lifted. The Assessors completed 25 Business assessments (PAS, BAS) and 158 Environmental Rating Scale assessments (ERS) which includes Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS), Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) and Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS). This is a total of 183 assessments conducted across the State of Montana. Montana had identified providing additional consumer education for assessment tools as one of its goals in the 22-24 state plan. Montana had previously created a training that was put on the statewide distance training platform to help support assessment understanding. This training called, What's the Fuss, is required at a STAR 1. Montana**

continues to survey providers that have received assessments during the current application period and the Quality team reviews the outcomes regularly. Montana continues to plan ways to support assessment and is researching the ability to have a direct assessment email, for providers, that is staffed and answered by assessment staff. Additionally, Montana is looking at creating a yearly best practice document compiling "outstanding work" identified by reliable assessors.

STARS To Quality had 15 new licensed programs apply to participate in our QRIS. Four of these programs moved to a higher STAR level within 6 months of being accepted indicating programs were planning and meeting some of the QRIS criteria before applying.

The following changes were not anticipated in the 22-24 state plan, but we believe will be effective to support the work force. STARS to Quality responded to the perceived hardship around training and staff retention by implementing a one-year orientation period for training requirements. Staff in STARS to Quality programs were not required to complete any STARS trainings within their first year of employment. This was implemented to support MT Child Care Licensing so that new staff could focus on completing the required licensing trainings within their first 90 days of employment. The extra months given within the one-year orientation period was to allow staff to have time to acclimate into the program and build relationships with the children. Our goal was to alleviate the training stress for providers and staff to increase staff retention. The one-year orientation period allowed staff to now have 18 to 24 months to complete required STARS trainings depending on the programs STAR level. An additional change in place is to discontinue the 60 hour Preschool Teacher Course and 60 Infant Toddler course. These courses will be replaced by a combined training that will be 20-30 hours in length. Providers stated the 60 hour courses as being a barrier in staff retention and a cost hardship.

2) Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce

Goal: *Ensure the lead agency's professional development systems or framework provides initial and ongoing professional development and education that result in a diverse and stable child care workforce with the competencies and skills to support all domains of child development. Please select N/A as appropriate.*

2.1 Lead Agency Progression of Professional Development

2.1.1 Did the lead agency use a workforce registry or professional development registry to track progression of professional development during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes. If yes, describe: **Montana Early Childhood Project Practitioner Registry**
 No. If no, what alternative does the lead agency use to track the progression of professional development for teachers/providers serving children who receive CCDF subsidy? Describe:

2.1.2 Are any teachers/providers required to participate?

Yes. If yes, describe: **All licensed center based childcare and family childcare providers are required to be on the registry.**
 No. If no, describe:

2.1.3 Total number of participants in the registry as of September 30, 2022 **4797**

2.2 Workforce Development

2.2.1 What supports did the lead agency make available to teachers/providers to help them progress in their education, professional development, and career pathway between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022 (check all that apply)? If available, how many people received each type of support?

Scholarships (for formal education institutions) **122**
 Financial bonus/wage supplements tied to education levels **2857**
 Career advisors, mentors, coaches, or consultants **22**
 Reimbursement for training **141**
 Loans
 Substitutes, leave (paid or unpaid)for professional development
 Other. Describe:
 N/A. Describe:

2.2.2 What compensation and benefits improvements did the lead agency support for teachers/providers between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022 (check all that apply)? If available, how many people received each type of support?

- Financial bonuses (not tied to education levels) **2857**
- Salary enhancements/wage supplements
- Health insurance coverage
- Dental insurance coverage
- Retirement benefits
- Loan Forgiveness programs
- Mental Health/Wellness programs
- Other. Describe:
- N/A. Describe:

For questions 2.3 to 2.4 please report on the number of staff by qualification level as of September 30, 2022. Count only the highest level attained by staff.

| 2.3 Licensed child care providers | Licensed child care center directors | Licensed child care center teachers | Licensed family child care providers | If N/A, explain |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| a. Total number: | 217 | 2034 | 1214 | |
| b. How many had a Child Development Associate (CDA)? | 6 | 91 | 19 | |
| c. How many had an Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g., psychology, human development, education)? | 16 | 90 | 42 | |

| 2.3 Licensed child care providers | Licensed child care center directors | Licensed child care center teachers | Licensed family child care providers | If N/A, explain |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| d. How many had a Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g., psychology, human development, education)? | 81 | 225 | 115 | In previous years the State only counted a Bachelors degree in Education. This year the State has included all bachelor degrees regardless of the major of study. |
| e. How many had a State child care credential? | 14 | 274 | 210 | |
| f. How many had State infant and toddler credentials? | 23 | 346 | 254 | |
| g. How many had an "other" degree? Define "other" degree: Individuals with a non-related associates or bachelor's degree or with any kind of master's or doctorate | 33 | 177 | 112 | |

| 2.4 Licensed CCDF providers | Licensed child care center directors who serve children who receive CCDF subsidy | Licensed child care center teachers who serve children who receive CCDF subsidy | Licensed family child care providers who serve children who receive CCDF subsidy | If N/A, explain |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|-----------------|
| a. Total number: | 162 | 1533 | 783 | |

| 2.4 Licensed CCDF providers | Licensed child care center directors who serve children who receive CCDF subsidy | Licensed child care center teachers who serve children who receive CCDF subsidy | Licensed family child care providers who serve children who receive CCDF subsidy | If N/A, explain |
|--|--|---|--|-----------------|
| b. How many had a Child Development Associate (CDA)? | 4 | 72 | 13 | |
| c. How many had an Associate's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g., psychology, human development, education)? | 12 | 56 | 25 | |
| d. How many had a Bachelor's degree in an early childhood education field (e.g., psychology, human development, education)? | 57 | 129 | 63 | |
| e. How many had a State child care credential? | 45 | 240 | 160 | |
| f. How many had State infant and toddler credentials? | 65 | 303 | 175 | |
| g. How many had an "other" degree? Define "other" degree: Number of individuals with a non-related associates or bachelors degree or with any kind of masters or doctorate. | 22 | 115 | 56 | |

2.5 How many providers received the following additional forms of professional development and/or technical assistance from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| | Total | Licensed or registered center-based programs | License-exempt center-based programs | Licensed or registered family child care homes | License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) | In-home (care in the child's own home) |
|---|-------|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| a) Business practices | 7719 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| b) Mental health | 1835 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| c) Diversity, equity, and inclusion | 975 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| d) Emergency Preparedness Planning | 2886 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| e) Other: CACFP. The state reporting systems do not disaggregate PD data based on provider type. | 442 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

2.6 Spending:

2.6.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources to support the **training and professional development** of the child care workforce during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|--|
| <p>a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year)</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ 900108.00 If yes, describe how funds were used: Funds supported the Early Childhood Project and many of our Professional Development Awards. Activities include, workforce registry, PD tracking for providers, Higher Ed Award, Course completion award for Preschool Course, Accreditation Award and support for Higher Ed Consortium meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe:</p> |
| <p>b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe:</p> |
| <p>c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe:</p> |
| <p>d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe:</p> |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|---|
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ 1683000.00 If yes, describe how funds were used: Funds provided retention/incentive awards for direct care providers in licensed child care programs. <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

2.7 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in 6.3.2 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes: Detailed quarterly reports are submitted to the Early Childhood Services Bureau by the Early Childhood Project that indicate data regarding the Practitioner Registry, the Professional Development Approval System, and incentives and awards. Customized reports about the workforce, including wages, are available upon request and developed as needed. The Career Development Advisory Board receives a full annual report of ECP operations for review at their annual spring meeting. The ECP develops an annual Work Plan that identifies goals, objectives and activities for each year. The ECP and each CCR&R agency is monitored by the Early Childhood Services Bureau on a regular basis to ensure completion of goals, objectives and activities and to address successes, challenges and needs related to performance. For the reporting timeframe, 4,797 individuals are current on the ECP Registry. The ECP received a total of 5,032 registry applications which was up from 4,180 applications during the reporting time frame in 2021. ECP also approves individuals for a Director's Credential and during the reporting time frame there were 44 current which was up from 32 in 2021. ECP approved 1,300 technical assistance events and 742 training events were completed, including 447 events through CCR&Rs.

3) Improving early learning and development guidelines

Goal: To ensure the lead agency has research-based early learning and development guidelines appropriate for children birth to age 12, including children with special needs and dual language learners that are used to inform practice and professional development.

3.1 Were any changes or updates made to the State or Territory’s early learning and development guidelines during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes. If yes, describe changes or updates:

No

N/A Describe:

3.2 Spending:

3.2.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources on the **development or implementation of early learning and development guidelines** during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|---|
| a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|---|
| d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

3.3 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in section 6.4 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to improving early learning and development guidelines. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes: Website Publication hits on Professional Development Training Materials =3,489

Website Publication hits on Professional development Specialists, MELs and Knowledge base (includes other content views) = 1,685

We had 425 providers complete the Montana Early Learning Standards course. This is a small decrease from last reporting period. This may be in part because it is required at level two in STARS to Quality for lead teachers and directors and with licensing requiring fewer Lead Teachers, fewer individuals are required to take the course.

4) Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and other transparent system of quality indicator

Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements a quality rating and improvement system, or other quality rating system, to promote high-quality early care and education programs.

4.1 Indicate the status and include a description of the lead agency's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

The lead agency QRIS is operating state- or territory-wide.

Please describe all QRIS tiers and which tiers are considered high quality care: **Montana has a five tiered rating system. Montana defines high quality care as programs achieving a STAR 3, 4 and 5 in STARS to Quality, Montana's QRIS. All levels are determined based on programs meeting a variety of criteria including, for levels 2-5, assessment scores. Environment Rating Scales and Program/Business Administration scales are administered by contracted reliable assessors. Each level of STARS requires different thresholds of achievement.**

The lead agency QRIS is operating a pilot (e.g., in a few localities, or only a few levels) but not fully operating state- or territory-wide.

Please describe all QRIS tiers and which tiers are considered high quality care:

The lead agency is operating another system of quality improvement.

Describe this system and your definition of high quality care, which may include assessment scores, accreditation, or other metrics:

The lead agency does not have a QRIS or other system of quality improvement.

Please include your definition of high quality care:

4.2 What types of providers participated in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 (check all that apply)?

Licensed child care centers

Licensed family child care homes

License-exempt providers

Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy

Early Head Start programs

Head Start programs

State Prekindergarten or preschool programs

Local district-supported Prekindergarten programs

Programs serving infants and toddlers

Programs serving school-age children

Faith-based settings

Tribally operated programs

Other. Describe: **All programs participating in STARS to Quality must be licensed with the Child Care.**

4.3 For each setting, indicate the number of providers eligible to participate in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement and the number of providers participating as of September 30, 2022?

| | License d child care centers | License- exempt child care centers | Licensed family child care homes | License- exempt family child care homes | In-home (care in the child's own home) | Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy | Other, Describe: |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---------------------|
| a. Number of providers eligible for QRIS or other system of quality improvement | 307 | 0 | 593 | 0 | 0 | 419 | 0 |
| b. Number of providers participating in QRIS or other system of quality improvement | 118 | 0 | 99 | 0 | 0 | 152 | 0 |

| | License d child care centers | License- exempt child care centers | Licensed family child care homes | License- exempt family child care homes | In-home (care in the child's own home) | Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy | Other, Describe: |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| c. N/A, describe | | All license d child care progra ms in good standin g are eligible to particip ate in the state's QRIS progra m, STARS to Quality. Particip ation in the QRIS progra m is volunta ry and eligible progra ms are not require d to particip ate in | | All license d child care progra ms in good standin g are eligible to particip ate in the state's QRIS progra m, STARS to Quality. Particip ation in the QRIS progra m is volunta ry and eligible progra ms are not require d to particip ate in | All license d child care progra ms in good standin g are eligible to particip ate in the state's QRIS progra m, STARS to Quality. Particip ation in the QRIS progra m is voluntar y and eligible progra ms are not required to particip ate in the state's QRIS. | | All license d child care progra ms in good standin g are eligible to particip ate in the state's QRIS progra m, STARS to Quality. Particip ation in the QRIS progra m is voluntar y and eligible progra ms are not required to particip ate in the state's QRIS. |

| | License d child care centers | License- exempt child care centers | Licensed family child care homes | License- exempt family child care homes | In-home (care in the child's own home) | Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy | Other, Describe: |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|---------------------|
| | | the state's QRIS. | | the state's QRIS. | | | |

4.4 Is participation in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement mandatory for any group of providers?

Yes (check all that apply).

- Licensed child care centers
- Licensed family child care homes
- License-exempt providers
- Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy
- Early Head Start programs
- Head Start programs
- State Prekindergarten or preschool programs
- Local district-supported Prekindergarten programs
- Programs serving infants and toddlers
- Programs serving school-age children
- Faith-based settings
- Tribally operated programs
- Other. Describe:

No.

N/A Describe

4.5 Enter the number of programs that met the lead agency's high quality definition as of September 30, 2022:

- a) Licensed child care centers **62**
- b) License-exempt child care centers **0**
- c) Licensed family child care homes **40**
- d) License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) **0**
- e) In-home (care in the child's own home) **0**
- f) Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy **72**

N/A. Describe

4.6 Enter the number of CCDF children in high quality care by age grouping as of September 30, 2022:

a. Total number of CCDF children in high quality care **580**

i. Infant **50**

Define age range: from **0** weeks months years through **12** weeks months years

ii. Toddler **310**

Define age range: from **1** weeks months years through **3** weeks months years

iii. Preschool **153**

Define age range: from **4** weeks months years through **5** weeks months years

iv. School-age **67**

Define age range: from **6** weeks months years through **12** weeks months years

b. Other. Describe **No other age groupings reported**

c. N/A. Describe:

4.7 Did the lead agency provide one-time grants, awards or bonuses connected to (or related to) QRIS or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? If yes, how many were provided to the following types of programs during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes, the following programs received grants.

- a. Licensed child care centers
- b. License-exempt child care centers
- c. Licensed family child care homes
- d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)
- e. In-home (care in the child's own home)
- f. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy

No.

N/A. Describe:

4.8 Did the lead agency provide on-going or periodic quality stipends (e.g. annual participation bonus, recurring bonuses for maintaining quality level) connected to (or related to) QRIS or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? If yes, how many programs received on-going or periodic quality stipends connected to (or related to) QRIS or other system of quality improvement during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes, the following programs received stipends.

- a. Licensed child care centers **109**
- b. License-exempt child care centers **0**
- c. Licensed family child care homes **97**
- d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) **0**
- e. In-home (care in the child's own home) **0**
- f. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy **164**

No.

N/A. Describe: **Montana does not have license-exempt centers, and license-exempt family child care and in-home providers do not qualify to participate in quality stipends.**

4.9 Did the lead agency provide higher subsidy rates (included tiered rates) related to the QRIS or other quality rating system during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? If so, how many programs received higher subsidy payment rates due to their QRIS rating during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes, the following programs received higher subsidy rates.

- a. Licensed child care centers **92**
- b. License-exempt child care centers **0**
- c. Licensed family child care homes **71**
- d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) **0**
- e. In-home (care in the child's own home) **0**
- f. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy **199**

No.

N/A. Describe: **Montana does not have license-exempt center, and family child care providers. The state reporting system that tracks subsidy rates does include information about specific programs or caregivers.**

4.10 Did the lead agency provide ongoing technical assistance related to the QRIS or other quality rating system during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? If so, how many

programs received ongoing technical assistance during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes, the following programs received ongoing technical assistance.

- a. Licensed child care centers **114**
- b. License-exempt child care centers **0**
- c. Licensed family child care homes **102**
- d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) **0**
- e. In-home (care in the child's own home) **0**
- f. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy **133**

No.

N/A. Describe: **Montana does not have license-exempt center, and family child care providers. The state reporting system that tracks TA does include information about specific programs or caregivers.**

4.11 Spending:

4.11.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources to support QRIS or other quality rating systems during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|--|
| a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ 52488.00 If yes, describe how funds were used: The activity supported by these funds is the contract with Branagh. This data base houses the assessment data and reports for QRIS participants that received assessments as part of their participation in QRIS. <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|---|
| c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

4.12 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in section 7.3.6 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to Developing, implementing, or enhancing a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and other transparent system of quality indicator. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes. For STARS to Quality, ERS baseline assessments are conducted upon a program’s acceptance into STARS. This allows

the STARS to Quality team to gather baseline data and track progress as the program moves up in the framework. From FFY2021-FFY2022, there were 11 ECERS-3, 8 ITERS-3, and 14 FCCERS-3 baseline assessments completed. Montana reviews STARS to Quality program movement in the framework. Beginning at STAR 3, the indicators are embedded into the framework to collect data and measure program progress towards increased quality. High stakes assessments are conducted for programs renewing or applying for a STAR 3-5. MT considers STAR 3 to be the start of high quality. STARS to Quality was unable to determine growth between FFY21 and FFY22 due to not being able to conduct in-person assessments due to Covid health and safety restrictions. ERS assessments must be conducted in person to gather true data around what a child experiences on a daily basis. 83% of programs receiving an ECERS-3 assessments scored a 4.0 or higher. The average overall score for all high stakes ECERS-3 assessments was 4.93 with higher scores Interactions which includes Supervision, Individualized teaching, staff-child interactions and peer interactions. There was also high scores in program structure. 91% of programs receiving an ITERS-3 assessment score a 4.0 or higher with the average overall score being a 5.08. We saw high scores in Language and Books which includes encourage vocabulary and high scores in interactions. 89% of assessments that occurred in Family/Group homes (FCCERS-3) scored a 4.0 or higher with an overall average score being 5.22. As with the other tools, we found high scores in Interactions and Program Structure. The 3rd version of the tools shifted the focus to teacher interactions and building relationships. The higher scores we saw shows children are receiving high quality interactions and building strong, supportive relationships with child care providers and teachers. . Data for training, technical assistance, and coaching within STARS programs is tracked and used to inform and build upon the overall system. In FY2022, individuals completed 28,500 hours of STARS to Quality qualified training.

5) Improving the supply and quality of child care programs for infants and toddlers

Goal: Ensure adequate and stable supply of high quality child care with a qualified, skilled workforce to promote the healthy development of infants and toddlers. Please report on all activities funded by quality dollars and infant toddler set-aside.

5.1 Provide the total number of state or territory-funded infant toddler specialists available to providers during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022.

Yes, specialists are available.

- a. Number of specialists available to all providers
- b. Number of specialists available to providers serving children who receive CCDF
- c. Number of specialists available specifically trained to support family child care providers
- d. Number of providers served
- e. Total number of children reached

No, there are no funded specialists.

N/A. Describe:

5.2 Please provide the total number of programs receiving state or territory-funded on-site coaching in infant and toddler practice and the percentage of these programs that served CCDF children.

| | Licensed child care centers | License-exempt child care centers | Licensed family child care homes | License-exempt family child care homes | In-home (care in the child's own home) providers |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|
| a. Number of programs receiving on-site coaching | 11 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| b. Percent of total programs receiving on-site coaching that served children who receive CCDF | 81% | 0% | 40% | 0% | 0% |

| | Licensed child care centers | License-exempt child care centers | Licensed family child care homes | License-exempt family child care homes | In-home (care in the child's own home) providers |
|------------------|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| c. N/A, describe | | Montana does not have license-exempt child care centers. | | Montana does not have license-exempt family child care providers. | Montana does not have in-home providers receiving on-site coaching. |

5.3 How did the lead agency promote and expand child care providers' ability to provide developmentally appropriate services for infants and toddlers during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Infant/toddler health consultants available. Describe:

Infant/toddler mental health consultants available. Describe:

Coordination with early intervention specialists providing services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Describe:

Other. Describe: **We monetarily incentivized a 60 hour infant toddler course for all providers who completed it in full.**

N/A. Describe:

5.5 Provide the number of staffed family child care networks supported by CCDF funds through direct agreement with a centralized hub or community-based agency during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022.

Number of staffed family child care networks: **1**

Describe what the hub provides to participating family child care providers: **Montana contracts with an outside organization, Raise Montana, to support a home-based child care provider network. As part of that contract, Raise Montana provides shared services, technical assistance, and professional development opportunities, including an annual home-based provider conference.**

No staffed family child care networks supported by CCDF funds.

N/A. Describe:

5.6 Spending

5.6.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources, in addition to the 3% infant and toddler set-aside, to **improve the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers** during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|--|
| a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ 893354.56 If yes, describe how funds were used: Funds were used to support infant toddler initiatives. Individuals that completed the Infant/Toddler course received a completion award. Individuals that continued to work in the field received incremental payments to support continuity of care. Montana sunset this portion of the work and paid out all individual that had a current contract. <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|---|
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

5.7 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in section 7.4.2 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to improving the supply and quality of child care programs for infants and toddlers. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes. Montana continues to support infant toddler practices by supporting providers participating in the voluntary QRIS with ITERS and FCCERS assessments. Montana completed their final round of 60 hour Certified Infant Toddler Caregiver courses that were taught by the regional Resource and Referral agencies, during this reporting period. For FY22 85 individuals completed the Certified Infant Toddler Course. Individual that completed that course were eligible for the course completion Award. During FY22 44 individuals received the continuity of care award if they continued to support infants and toddlers. Montana paid 70,400 in continuity of care awards. These numbers are slightly lower than in previous years. The state received results from various needs assessments requesting a review of these 60 hour courses because of the heavy lift for providers. As with many things, the turn over in child care staff, the length of the required courses and the cost to owner/directors to pay for staff to take these courses were all things that will be considered.

6) Establishing, expanding, modifying, or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services

Goal: Lead agency provides: services to involve families in the development of their children, information on a full range of child care options, and assistance to families in selecting child care that is appropriate for the family's needs and is high quality as determined by the lead agency.

6.1 Describe how CCDF quality funds were used to establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide system of child care resource and referral services during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) services are divided into seven regions throughout the state. Each regional office offers consumer education, family engagement specialists, maintains referral data base support, and provides individualized referrals for parents seeking child care. This is available through the individual CCR&R websites and their toll-free phone numbers. CCR&Rs can provide local support for scholarship families in finding child care and have dedicated computer and phone lines for the public use. Additionally, CCR&Rs provide consumer education on a local community level. Montana has a CCR&R Network, which is funded from the Lead Agency and has a full-time Network Director position. The CCR&R Network is a statewide network of 6 community-based CCR&R agencies who work to improve the quality, accessibility, and affordability of child care for Montana's families. The mission of the CCR&R Network is to unite Montana's Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies and coordinate efforts to build a high quality, accessible early childhood care and education system that supports young children, parents, early childhood professionals, and member organizations. This is done by providing training and support to member agencies; initiating projects to build child care supply and quality in urban and rural areas; educating policy makers, businesses, and the public on child care issues; advocating for child care professionals and families. The Montana CCR&R Network meets quarterly, and often invites the Lead Agency to attend the meetings to provide updates, answer questions, and to collaborate as a partnership

6.2 Spending

6.2.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources to **establish, expand, modify, or maintain a statewide CCR&R** during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|---|
| a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ 3109194.00 If yes, describe how funds were used: Funds supported the work of all 7 Resource and referral contacts for QRIS support and provider support. Additionally, these dollars supported CCUBS pulls. <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|---|
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

6.3 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in section 7.5.2 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to establishing, expanding, modifying, or maintaining a statewide system of child care resource and referral services. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes. Montana continues to have 6 Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, serving 7 local regions in Montana. All regions submitted quarterly reports timely. The lead agency held two training sessions with the regions and the network to ensure data was collected consistently across regions. In addition, the lead agency provided feedback to each of the regions after the submission of the first submitted quarterly report, providing examples of things that needed to be reported in a different way as well as distributing to all regions, things that were working well. The Network (RAISE) has been able to support the Resource and Referral Agencies to coordinate trainings across the state to ensure equity of services to all providers. RAISE has the same expectation of quarterly report submissions. Both RAISE and the R and R's have regularly scheduled meetings for all contract leads.

7) Facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards

Goal: To ensure child care providers maintain compliance with lead agency licensing, inspection, monitoring, and health and safety standards and training.

7.1 Has the lead agency aligned CCDF health and safety standards with the following?

- a. Licensing standards
 Yes.
 No. If not, describe why:
- b. Caring for Our Children Basics
 Yes.
 No. If not, describe why:
- c. Head Start
 Yes.
 No. If not, describe why:
- d. State pre-k
 Yes.
 No. If not, describe why: **Montana does not have state pre-k**

7.2 Complaints regarding child care providers received during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022

7.2.1 How many complaints were received regarding providers during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

- a. Licensed providers **372**
- b. License-exempt providers **0**

7.2.2 What was the average length of time between receiving the complaint and taking steps to respond to a complaint during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? **12 days**

7.2.3 How many complaints received an on-site follow-up inspection during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? **95**

7.2.4 How many of the complaints resulted in one or more *substantiated* violations in the program or provider site identified during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? **19**

- 7.2.5 How many child care providers had CCDF funding revoked as a result of an inspection during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? **2**
- 7.2.6 How many child care providers closed as a result of an inspection during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? **2**
- 7.2.7 Please provide any additional information regarding health and safety complaints and inspections in the state or territory during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022:
N/A

7.3 How many child care programs received coaching or technical assistance to improve their understanding and adherence to CCDF health and safety standards (as a result of an inspection or violation) during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

- a. Licensed center-based programs **6**
- b. License-exempt center-based programs **0**
- c. Licensed family child care homes **14**
- d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) **0**
- e. In-home (care in the child's own home) **0**
- f. N/A Describe: **Montana does not have license-exempt center, and family child care providers. The state reporting system that tracks coaching does include information about specific programs or caregivers.**

7.5 Spending:

7.5.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources on facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspections, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|--|
| a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ 891688.00 If yes, describe how funds were used: Funds include the salaries and benefits for all Child Care Licensors. Additionally, a portion of these funds are used to pay for the system that is used by CCL for reports. <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|--|
| b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ 97537.00 If yes, describe how funds were used: Background checks <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

7.6 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in section 7.6.3 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to facilitating compliance with lead agency requirements for inspection, monitoring, health and safety standards and training, and lead agency licensing standards. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes. During SFY2022 the lead agency paid for all fingerprint-based FBI background checks and fingerprint-based Montana criminal history checks. As a result, 5114 of 5157, or 99.2% of all approved staff and adult household members, including the backlog and new hires, were compliant with fingerprint-based FBI background check requirements by the end of FFY22. The lead agency continued to conduct all name based background checks at no cost to the provider. The lead agency also developed processes for better assisting child care providers with interstate background checks.

The lead agency held monthly meetings with MT Department of Justice/Division of Criminal History staff to troubleshoot Livescan challenges and identify gaps in FBI check processes, with the goal of reducing processing times and eliminating errors including missing FBI results. As a result, the turn-around time for FBI check results was reduced from 3-4 weeks to less than 2 weeks for Livescan and less than 3 weeks for hard copy prints. Processes were revised to identify and report missing results weekly. In most cases, results could then be located immediately after reporting.

During FFY2022 the lead agency hired one additional full time administrative technician to help process new hire applications and help track training and background check requirements. As a result, the time it takes to approve a new hire application was reduced from 3 weeks or more to approximately 7-10 days. The lead agency was also able to provide increased tracking and monitoring for new hire requirements.

Workforce grants were used to encourage new individuals to enter the early childhood workforce and to incentivize retention. Incentives were only paid out once all background checks and health and safety orientation training requirements were completed. Although not causally linked, staff requirements were met at a higher rate than before.

Over 91%, or 3682 of the 4064 direct care staff that had been approved to work in a licensed child care facility and had been working for at least 30 days by the end of FFY22, were current with adult, infant and child CPR and pediatric First aid requirements and infant safety requirements (due within 30 days of hire). Over 95%, or 3279 of the 3456 direct care staff that had been approved to work in a licensed child care facility and had

been working for at least 90 days by the end of FFY22, had completed all components of the required health and safety orientation training (due within 90 days of hire). It is believed that providers were more consistent about submitting new hire applications. As stated above, over 99% of all approved staff were compliant with FBI check requirements.

Starting in October of 2021, the lead agency contracted Bloom Consulting to conduct 2-3 year Child Care Licensing Business Process Review project. The project's purpose was to examine and improve child care licensing requirements and processes to understand how we can better support the child care system to provide quality care and increase capacity of Montana's child care system. The project scope was to assess child care licensing strengths and gaps; analyze, recommend and implement opportunities to clarify, streamline, align, or otherwise improve statutes, regulations, and policies; conduct value stream and business process mapping and develop re-engineering recommendations; look at data systems and how they could better support business process improvements; develop and revise policies and procedures; and support organizational change management work. First, the lead agency worked with Bloom consulting to conduct a comprehensive assessment that analyzes stakeholder input about strengths and gaps in the state's childcare licensing program. The assessment is a foundational component of a broader project to improve childcare licensing for the state, which includes improvements to child care licensing regulations, policies, procedures, and data systems. The 2022 Montana Child Care Licensing Assessment can be found at MT CCL Project Assessment. Next the lead agency worked with Bloom Consulting and other stakeholders to draft a new rule package for child care licensing administrative rules. The new rule package was drafted and reorganized with the goal of supporting regulatory and system improvement. Additional goals include eliminating overlapping regulations within and across partner agencies as well as aligning out of school time with public education facilities and health requirements.

8) Evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs in the state or territory, including evaluating how programs positively impact children

Goal: Lead agency investment in effective quality improvement strategies using reliable data from evaluation and assessment

8.1 What measure(s) or tool(s) and studies did the lead agency use to evaluate and assess the quality of programs and effective practice in center-based programs during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

To measure program quality, describe: **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)-3, Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)-3, and the Program Administration Scale (PAS) are used to measure program quality in center-based programs.**

To measure effective practice, describe: **ECERS and ITERS are used to measure effective practice in center-based programs.**

To measure age appropriate child development, describe: **In July of 2021, STAR 4 and 5 programs were required to implement screening, utilizing a valid and reliable screening tool. As of July 1, 2022, these STAR 4 and 5 programs are required to have the screening process in place and were required to implement the screening. They must provide evidence of screening by indicating the screening tool they are using and entering the number of children screened during the last application period (July 2021) and the number of children screened who were referred. Providers must enter the information into the STARS application site where data reports can be formulated by ECP.**

Other, describe:

N/A. Describe:

8.2 What measure(s) or tool(s) and studies did the lead agency use to evaluate and assess the quality of programs and effective practice in family child care programs during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

To measure program quality, describe: **Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale FCCERS 3, and the Business Administration Scale, BAS, are used to measure program quality in family child care programs.**

To measure effective practice, describe: **FCCERS is used to measure effective practice in family child care programs.**

To measure age appropriate child development, describe: **STAR 4 and 5 programs were required to implement screening, utilizing a valid and reliable screening tool. As of July 1, 2022, these STAR 4 and 5 programs are required to have the screening process in place and were required to implement the screening. They must provide evidence of screening by indicating the screening tool they are using and entering the number of children screened during the last application period (July 2021) and the number of children screened who were referred. Providers must enter the information into the STARS application site where data reports can be formulated by ECP.**

Other, describe:

N/A. Describe:

8.3 Spending:

8.3.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources on evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs, practice, or child development during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|---|
| <p>a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year)</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ 125867.90 If yes, describe how funds were used: Funds were used to pay for the assessments of quality that are part of Montana’s QRIS. Additionally, these funds pay for the QRIS assessors to become and remain reliable. <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe:</p> |
| <p>b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.)</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe:</p> |
| <p>c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe:</p> |
| <p>d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe:</p> |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|---|
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

8.4 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in section 7.7.2 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to evaluating and assessing the quality of child care programs in the state or territory, including evaluating how programs positively impact children. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes. The Lead Agency collects the scores of all the Environment Rating Scales to measure progress of STAR Level 3, 4, and 5 programs within a determined time period. Programs must achieve a certain score within the Environment Rating Scales in order to advance or maintain levels from STAR 3 and up. FFY22 showed 83% of programs achieving a score of 4.0 or higher in the ECERS-3 tool. 91% of programs received a score of 4.0 or higher in the ITERS-3 tool and 89% of programs received a score of 4.0 or higher in the FCCERS-3 tool. The data showed high scores in the areas of Language and Literacy (encouraging vocabulary development, using and encouraging books and becoming familiar with print), Interactions (Individualized teaching and learning, staff child interactions, and peer interactions) and Program Structure (transitions and wait times, free play, and whole group play and learning). Children learn best when they feel safe and cared for. High scores in interactions help build the foundation for a strong, caring relationship. Children rely on free play to do their best exploring and learning and so high scores in free play show programs are valuing children’s learning through free play.

The Lead Agency collects the scores of the Program and Business Administration Scales to measure progress of STAR Level 3, 4, and 5 programs. Programs must achieve a designated score within PAS and BAS to advance levels from STAR 3 and up. Typically, programs are only required to have this assessment every 3 years, or if they submit to move up a STAR level. There were 16 PAS assessments conducted in FFY2022 with 75% of them scoring a 4.0 or higher. The data showed high scores in Family Support and involvement with an average score of 5.13. Fiscal management had an average score of 4.22 which includes Budget planning and Accounting Practices. These are important business practices to have during a pandemic where child enrollment was lower and staff retention was an increased concern for providers. 9 BAS assessments were conducted in FFY22 with an average score of 3.88. There were high scores in Work Environment, Recordkeeping, and Marketing. Marketing was the highest average score of 4.89 indicating an increased awareness by providers of the important of marketing your business to increase awareness, therefore increasing the number of children served in high quality programs.

Montana has 37 STAR 4 programs and 17 STAR 5 programs. A STARS to Quality Assessment survey is sent out to all STAR 3, 4 and 5 programs who have received an assessment during an application period. There were 34 respondents with overall positive feedback. An additional question was added to the assessment for FFY22 asking providers what they thought about the new Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) report they now receive with the 3rd edition of the tools. Providers used to receive a Summary report that did not provide any feedback on how programs could score higher. Providers reported positive feedback stating they liked how the report didn't seem to focus on what the program did wrong, but instead focused on the strengths while giving strategies to achieve higher quality. STARS to Quality will be using the survey responses to determine what changes can be made to QRIS.

9) Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation

Goal: Support child care programs and FCCs in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of quality

9.1 How many providers did the lead agency support in their pursuit of accreditation during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes, providers were supported in their pursuit of accreditation

- a. Licensed center-based programs **3**
- b. License-exempt center-based programs **0**
- c. Licensed family child care homes **4**
- d. License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home) **0**
- e. Programs serving children who receive CCDF subsidy **0**

No lead agency support given to providers in their pursuit of accreditation.

N/A. Describe: **Montana does not have license-exempt center, and family child care providers. The state reporting system that tracks accreditation does include information about specific programs or caregivers.**

9.2 Spending

9.2.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources on accreditation during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|--|
| a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: This activity is supported by a contract with the Early Childhood Project as referenced in 2.6.1. |
| b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|---|
| c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

9.3 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in section 7.8.2 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes. In FY 2021, 7 licensed programs statewide were supported through ECP with an accreditation scholarship. There are currently 17 programs at STAR 5. Of those, 10 are either accredited through either NAEYC or NAFCC. 7 Head Starts are at level 5.

10) Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

Goal: Assist programs to meet high-quality comprehensive program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development

10.1 Quality Indicators: Does the lead agency have quality improvement standards that include indicators covering the following areas beyond what is required for licensing?

- Yes, check which indicators the lead agency has established:
 - Health, nutrition, and safety of child care settings
 - Physical activity and physical development in child care settings
 - Mental health of children
 - Mental health for staff/employees
 - Learning environment and curriculum
 - Ratios and group size
 - Staff/provider qualifications and professional development
 - Teacher/provider-child relationships
 - Teacher/provider instructional practices
 - Family partnerships and family strengthening
 - Other. Describe:
- No

10.2 Spending

10.2.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources on supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|--|
| a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ 1200000.00 If yes, describe how funds were used: STARS quarterly incentives. <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|---|
| b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

10.3 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in section 7.9.2 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes. STARS to Quality is open to any licensed/registered child care program to participate. STARS to Quality professional development opportunities will continue to be available to providers in Montana whether or not they are participating in STARS to Quality. Data collected and evaluated includes: number of STARS providers signing up for STARS required professional development, number of STARS providers completing professional development opportunities, role types of providers signing up for and completing professional development opportunities. Professional development completion is not tracked separately for individuals in STARS to Quality programs, versus non-STARS to Quality programs. A total of 5,702 individuals across all role types completed at least one STARS to Quality training during the reporting year. This number has again increased from reporting year. The total hours of training was 100,992.

The target outcome in 7.9.2 of the state plan was that all providers are familiar with the standards and integrate the Montana Early Learning Standards to their curriculum. Last year, 415 providers completed the MELS course.

11) Other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry

Goal: To improve the quality of child care programs and services related to outcomes measuring improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry

11.1 Did the state or territory set up a grant program (NOT including American Rescue Plan Act stabilization grants) designed to sustain the child care supply or provide sustainability funding to child care providers due to the COVID-19 pandemic during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes. If yes, describe and check which types of providers were eligible and number served.

- Licensed center-based programs
- License-exempt center-based programs
- Licensed family child care homes
- License-exempt family child care homes (care in providers' home)
- In-home (care in the child's own home)
- Other (explain)

No.

N/A. Describe:

11.2 Did the lead agency provide supports and resources in response to any of the following emergent health and safety needs of children and/or providers either through funding or directly in-kind during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 (check all that apply)?

COVID-19 vaccinations. Describe:

COVID-19 testing. Describe:

Access to infant formula. Describe:

Cleaning supplies and/or personal protective equipment (PPE). Describe:

Post-disaster recovery efforts. Describe:

Other. Describe:

N/A. Describe: **Some activities took place in the FY 2020-2021 report but not this year**

11.3 Did the state/territory invest in data systems to support equitable access to child care (e.g., modernizing and maintaining systems; technology upgrades and data governance improvements to provide more transparent and updated information to parents; a workforce registry; updated QRIS systems; CCR&R updates; monitoring systems) from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes. Describe: In FFY22, Montana used funds to update the state's subsidy eligibility and child care licensing system, Child Care Under the Big Sky (CCUBS) Web. Montana continues work on migrating CCUBS from an Oracle database to a web-based application. The migration allows for enhanced electronic processes. Upgrades to CCUBS Web are ongoing, and Montana will continue with updates to the system into FFY23.

Montana has two ongoing projects, one is to improve licensing business process, and the other is to conduct a data system analysis. The licensing business process improvement project is evaluating business processes, recommending process improvements, identifying system and data gaps and needs, and improve overall customer service experience for child care providers and families. The data system analysis project is supported by a contracted consultant and key state staff that possess the necessary expertise to provide project management, planning, system analysis, business analysis, technical analysis, design in assessing the CCUBS system.

The Child Care Licensing program continued working with the vendor on enhancements for SansWrite, the inspection software tool. An investigative template was added to the tool for investigating complaints. The main database, CCUBS, was updated to coordinate inspection dates from SansWrite with license approvals. New functionality was added in CCUBS to alert a licenser if an annual inspection is coming due. An additional control was added to CCUBS to prevent second level approval for a license or registration if an inspection date is not populated.

Enhancements were added to the online provider application to make it easier for a provider to apply, renew, or update their license on-line. The caregiver approval and tracking system has been enhanced to improve efficiency while allowing requirements for childcare staff, such as background checks and training, to be entered and viewed by licensing staff in one system.

Early Childhood Project is working on improvements to many internal processes. These improvements are designed to support providers using the system. Each procedure is being reviewed with the lens for efficiency and consistency. Individual training approval process, updating the data base to make sure the category options used for trainers to select trainings, reflects options available and updating all reports provided to ECSB are a few of the efficiencies that have been made.

No

11.4 Did the state/territory conduct an analysis of supply and demand or other needs assessment to identify areas of focus to build supply or target funding from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

Yes. Describe findings: Describe findings: ECFSD used a whitepaper prepared by the Montana Department of Labor and Industry analyzing the state's child care supply and demand gaps. The findings of this analysis revealed that Montana meets and estimated 44 percent of child care demand. The gap for infant and toddler care gap was even more pronounced at 34 percent of demand being met. 60 percent of Montana counties qualifying as "child care deserts," a geographic area where child care supply meets less than a third of the potential demand. The state earmarked a portion of the Stabilization ARPA funds to provide enhanced funding for child care programs operating in a child care desert. In addition, Montana used ARPA funds to finance innovative ideas across the state. These funds were awarded through a competitive RFP process with extra points being awarded to applicants who sought to address supply and demand gaps as they occur in child care deserts, the supply of infant and toddler care, and non-traditional hours of care.

In addition, Montana has contracted with two organizations, Raise Montana and Zero to Five, to provide shared services, training and professional development, peer mentoring, and technical assistance for child care providers.

No

11.5 Did the state/territory fund initiatives designed to address supply and demand issues related to child care deserts and/or vulnerable populations (such as infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, English language learners, and children who need child care during non-traditional hours) during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? Check all that apply.

Child care deserts

Infants/toddlers

Children with disabilities

English language learners

Children who need child care during non-traditional hours

Other. Describe:

11.6 Did the state/territory integrate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices into quality initiatives during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022? Check all that apply.

Reviewing policies/program design using DEI assessment tools

Development of DEI assessment tools

Incorporate into QRIS

Incorporate into PD Framework

Strategic planning

Supply building efforts

Strengthened outreach/communication to better understand diverse community needs and assets

Other. Describe: **The State did not integrate DEI into quality initiatives.**

11.7 How many providers received the following from October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| | Total | Licensed or registered center-based programs | License-exempt center-based programs | Licensed or registered family child care | License-exempt family child care (care in providers' home) | In-home (care in the child's own home) |
|--|-------|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| a) Increased rates | 850 | 265 | 0 | 449 | 113 | 23 |
| b) Increased wages | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| c) Benefits: health insurance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| d) Mental health supports | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| e) Start-up funds | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| f) Other: Montana has no other uses to report for this section | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

11.7a Describe: **The state does not have license-exempt center-base programs.**

11.7b Describe: **Montana did not implement this benefit to providers.**

11.7c Describe: **Montana did not implement this benefit to providers.**

11.7d Describe: **Montana did not implement this benefit to providers.**

11.7e Describe: **Montana did not implement this benefit to providers.**

11.8 Spending:

11.8.1 Did the lead agency spend funds from any of the following sources on other activities to improve the quality of child care services during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022?

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|---|--|
| a. CCDF quality set aside (from all available appropriation years that were spent during the fiscal year) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| b. Non-CCDF funds (e.g., TANF funds spent directly on quality, Preschool Development Funds, state or local funds, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent: \$ If yes, describe source(s) of funding and how funds were used: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: Montana State Department of Labor provided an in-kind report detailing child care deserts in Montana and highlighting the impact of the child care industry on the Montana workforce. The Department also promotes the apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship child care programs. |
| c. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| d. Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act, 2021 | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: Montana used CRRSA funds to expand subsidy payment policies and did not dedicate any of these funds to quality activities. |

| Funding source | Was this funding source used? |
|--|---|
| e. American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, 2021 Supplemental funding | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |
| f. ARP Act, 2021 Stabilization Grant set-aside ONLY (As a reminder 10% of the ARP Stabilization Grants could be set-aside for administrative expenses, supply building, and technical assistance. This question refers only to this 10%.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Amount spent \$ If yes, describe how funds were used: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A Describe: |

11.9 Progress Update: Using the measures identified in section 7.10.1 of the CCDF Plan, report on the progress made during October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022 on activities related to other activities to improve the quality of child care services supported by outcome measures that improve provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten-entry. In addition, describe outcomes achieved, including examples and numeric targets where possible. If progress was not made, describe barriers toward achieving measurable outcomes. **Parentingmontana.org continues to be an active consumer education for to Montana families. That status for ECSB has remained the same but the website has expanded to include other programs such as Early Intervention, which support the work of ECSB.**

12) Lead agencies must submit an annual report, as required at 45 CFR § 98.53(f) (4), describing any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on an annual review and assessment of serious child injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible.

12.1 Describe the annual review and assessment of serious injuries and any deaths occurring in child care programs receiving CCDF, and in other regulated and unregulated child care centers and family child care homes, to the extent possible. During SFY22, the lead agency worked with Bloom Consulting, as part of the Child Care Licensing Business Process Review project, to conduct an assessment. The assessment included a section to review deaths and serious injuries in child care as well as incidents of child abuse and neglect. When a complaint is made against a child care provider, some combination of child care licensing (if it is a licensed provider), the state's child protective services agency, known as Child and Family Services Division (CFSD/CPS), law enforcement (if it is a complaint of child maltreatment), and/or local health and safety agencies are involved in investigations. In focus groups, Child Care Licensing program (CCLP) staff and CFSD/CPS staff noted the lack of direct access to relevant information on both sides even though CCLP and CFSD/CPS often work together to investigate complaints. Communication between child care licensing and CFSD/CPS is strengthening, according to licensing and CFSD/CPS stakeholders, and as one CFSD/CPS staff member summed it up. The assessment determined that specific mutual understanding is needed about what constitutes a violation of child care licensing regulations, so that CFSD/CPS staff can know if complaints that do not rise to the level of child neglect should be referred to a licensor. Similarly, CCLP staff noted ambiguity about the respective roles and jurisdictions of CFSD/CPS and licensing in terms of information sharing and the ability to enforce rules.

12.2 Describe any changes to lead agency regulations, enforcement mechanisms, or other lead agency policies addressing health and safety based on the annual review and assessment. To help identify needs for preventative measures and improve the investigation process, the CCL and CFSD staff hold consistent meetings to refer cases from CFSD to child care licensing, host pre-meetings before an investigation begins, during the investigation, and regarding investigation closures and determinations. A flow chart or decision tree was created for cases related to child care, which could include broad licensing topics as well as guidance on when to contact a licensor, to help make the investigation process more standardized and efficient. As a result, child care licensors have become more invested in

increasing the consistency of communications, particularly with CFSD or licensing staff turnover.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) staff consistently said they explain their role to providers as complementary to licensors, emphasizing that they are there to provide support and guidance, not validate or approve anything. They highlighted the challenges in providing technical assistance when there is not a consistent starting point for providers, especially in terms of up-to-date paperwork and information being available. CCRR staff as well as providers emphasized the need for consistency between technical assistance and expectations, especially in the context of a licensing support plan to address deficiencies. Being more detailed in those plans as well as having a more robust policy manual that clarifies how to interpret and apply child care licensing regulations would provide a foundation for improved consistency and less ambiguity to ultimately decrease negative licensing actions.

The lead agency has also initiated meetings with CCRR staff to discuss a positive shift of licensors requesting CCRRs to provide informal technical assistance to providers as a first step in addressing problems before they become accidents, or injuries and avoid formal 'deficiencies' on the providers' record. These discussions led an approach to address deficiencies with graduated technical assistance, deficiency categories, and graduating negative licensing actions to help address problems and provide solutions without jumping straight to a negative licensing action that could adversely impact the individual provider and the families that rely on them. The group also discussed the idea of a tiered approach to defining deficiency categories and appropriate first steps to addressing them. As a result, a revised 'support plan' process was created and implemented.

13) American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act Child Care Stabilization Grants

Goal: To ensure the lead agency implements an equitable stabilization grant program. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act included approximately \$24 billion for child care stabilization grants, representing an important opportunity to stabilize the child care sector and do so in a way that builds back a stronger child care system that supports the developmental and learning needs of children, meets parents' needs and preferences with equal access to high-quality child care, and supports a professionalized workforce that is fairly and appropriately compensated for the essential skilled work that they do. Lead agencies must spend most stabilization funds as subgrants to qualified child care providers to support the stability of the child care sector during and after the COVID-19 public health emergency. Section 13 should be used to report on ARP Stabilization Grants ONLY.

13.1 Did you run more than one grant program? If so, list the number of separate grant programs and describe their uses.

Yes. Describe:

No

13.2 Which of the following methods were used to support workforce compensation (e.g., bonuses, stipends, increased base wages, or employee benefits) with stabilization grants? (check all that apply)

Targeted grants to support workforce compensation (no other allowable uses)

Providing bonus funds to providers that increased child care staff compensation through stabilization grants

Requiring a specific percentage or amount of stabilization grant funding go toward child care staff compensation increases. Percent or amount for staff compensation:

Other (Describe): **Workforce compensation, including bonuses, increased wages, and benefits, are one of the allowable operating expenses for Stabilization grants.**

13.3 Describe the methods used to eliminate fraud, waste, and abuse when providing stabilization grants (e.g., validated identity through the lead agency licensing system or conducted identity verification through a data match with state tax records):

Confirmed provider eligibility through the Montana Child Care Licensing program. Original provider awards did not exceed 45% of their reported annual operating expenses and were paid out over four quarters. Fifth payment awards were 9.5% of the program's reported operating expenses and added an additional three months to spend down for three of the four cohorts. Due to the funding timeline, the fourth cohort will not have the same time extension for the 5th payment. Programs located in an identified child care desert received an additional

award based on program size. Technical assistance with a business planning focus is available to support spend-down planning for all Stabilization grantees.