

2.1 Administration of the Program

The Lead Agency has broad authority to administer (i.e., establish rules) and operate (i.e., implement activities) the CCDF program through other governmental, non-governmental, or other public or private local agencies as long as it retains overall responsibility for the administration of the program. (658D(b), §98.11(a))

2.1.1. Which of the following CCDF program rules and policies are set or established at the State/Territory versus the local level? Identify the level at which the following CCDF program rules and policies are established.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Eligibility rules and policies (e.g., income limits) are set by the:

State/Territory

Local entity.

If checked, identify the type of policies the local entity(ies) can set

Other.

Describe:

Sliding fee scale is set by the:

State/Territory

Local entity.

If checked, identify the type of policies the local entity(ies) can set

Other.

Describe:

Payment rates are set by the:

State/Territory

Local entity.

If checked, identify the type of policies the local entity(ies) can set

Other.

Describe:

2.1.2. How is the CCDF program operated in your State/Territory? In the table below, identify which agency(ies) performs these CCDF services and activities.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Implementation of CCDF Services/Activities

Agency (Check all that apply)

Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)?

Implementation of CCDF Services/Activities

Who determines eligibility?

Note: If different for families receiving TANF benefits and families not receiving TANF benefits, please describe:

Reach Up (TANF) workers in DCF Economic Services Division (ESD) establish a need for service and approve eligibility for child care services for children and families participating in Reach Up. An automated electronic process transmits eligibility authorizations for these populations to the Community Child Care Support Agency specialists who create a certificate by connecting authorized Reach Up families to child care providers.

Agency (Check all that apply)

- CCDF Lead Agency
- TANF agency
- Other State/Territory agency.

Describe:

For children in Protective Service, the caseworker in the Family Services Division (FSD) approves child care as part of a safety plan for children with an open protective services case. An automated electronic process transmits eligibility authorizations for these populations to the Specialized Child Care Coordinators in community-based local Children's Integrated Services Teams who create a certificate by connecting authorized Protective Services children to approved Specialized CC Services.

- Local government agencies such as county welfare or social services departments
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Other.

Describe:

For children who are not participating in TANF or under protective services, eligibility staff in community based child care resource and referral agencies determine eligibility based on Child Care Financial Assistance Program rules.

Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)?

Agency (Check all that apply)

- CCDF Lead Agency
- TANF agency
- Other State/Territory agency.

Describe:

The CDD Bright Futures Information System (BFIS) provides a web-based searchable database with CC provider information that assists families in locating child care. The CDD website also contains information for parents on the benefits of choosing high quality child care. This information is also published in a booklet available in community agencies.

- Local government agencies such as county welfare or social services departments
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Other.

Describe:

Community Child Care Support Agencies are funded to provide referral services and information about the benefits of selecting high quality child care to all Vermont families

Who issues payments?

Agency (Check all that apply)

- CCDF Lead Agency
- TANF agency
- Other State/Territory agency.

Describe:

Attendance information is transmitted through a web-based system (BFIS). More than 80% of providers receive payments through electronic fund transfer. Providers may opt to receive paper checks instead.

- Local government agencies such as county welfare or social services departments
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Community-based organizations
- Other.

Describe:

Describe to whom is the payment issued (e.g., parent or provider) and how are payments distributed (e.g., electronically, cash, etc)

Payments are issued directly to child care providers who have submitted attendance on behalf of participating families..

Other. List and describe:

2.2. Family Outreach and Application Process

Lead Agencies must inform parents of eligible children and the general public of the process by which they can apply for and potentially receive child care services. (658D(b)(1)(A), 658E(c)(2)(D) & (3)(B), §§98.16(k), 98.30(a)-(e). **Note** - For any information in questions 2.2.1 through 2.2.10 that differs or will differ for families receiving TANF, please describe in 2.2.11.

2.2.1. By whom and how are parents informed of the availability of child care assistance services under CCDF? (658E(c)(2)(A), §98.30(a)) Check all agencies and strategies that will be used in your State/Territory.

- CCDF Lead Agency
- TANF offices
- Other government offices
- Child care resource and referral agencies
- Contractors
- Community-based organizations
- Public schools
- Internet

(provide website): <http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd>

- Promotional materials
- Community outreach meetings, workshops or other in-person meetings
- Radio and/or television
- Print media
- Other.

Describe:

2.2.2. How can parents apply for CCDF services? Check all application methods that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

- In person interview or orientation
- By mail
- By Phone/Fax
- Through the Internet

(provide website): <http://www.brightfutures.dcf.state.vt.us>

- By Email
- Through a State/Territory Agency
- Through an organization contracted by the State/Territory
- Other.

Describe:

2.2.3. Describe how the Lead Agency provides consumer education to parents applying for CCDF assistance to promote informed choices about the quality of

care provided by various providers in their communities.

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Lead Agencies must certify that the State/Territory will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public, consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices (658E (c)(2)(G), §98.33).

For example, memorandums of understanding with resource and referral agencies to provide consumer education to families applying for CCDF assistance, providing parents with provider lists showing licensing history and/or Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) ratings, or informational brochures that address importance of quality and different care options available.

The Child Development Division:

- enters into and monitors performance based agreements with Community Child Care Support Agencies to provide personalized consumer education services to all families with particular focus on families applying for CCDF assistance;
- provides and maintains an on-line searchable data base of all regulated child care providers that includes regulatory history and participation and rating in Vermont Step Ahead Recognitions System (STARS) and/or national accreditation;
- provides informational printed materials that address child care quality and options available to Vermont families

2.2.4. Describe how the Lead Agency will support child care programs to increase the likelihood that CCDF-served children receive higher quality care as defined in your State/Territory.

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For example, methods used to promote upward movement in quality rating and improvement system, methods used to encourage high quality programs to participate in the subsidy program such as tiered reimbursement, or incentives used to support high quality programs in rural, suburban, urban, and low-income communities.

Child Development Division:

- supports technical assistance in improving quality and navigating the Vermont STARS through agreements with Community Child Care Support Agencies in every region of the state;
- supports training about VT STARS and help with applying for and moving up in VT STARS through an agreement with a community agency responsible for statewide STARS administration;
- provides one time modest bonuses to providers for advancing up each level of STARS;
- uses tiered reimbursement rates in the CC Financial Assistance Program with significantly higher rates for subsidized families using programs with VT STARS ratings especially for those programs with ratings at 3 or more STARS (of five);
- structures tiered reimbursement in such a way as to support lower co-payments for subsidized families using higher quality care as documented by VT STARS;
- will work to increase public awareness of VT STARS and use of VT STARS ratings as a factor in choosing child care for Vermont families; and
- is working with a coalition of private funders to develop and implement a plan to increase registered

Family Child Care Home providers' participation and ratings in VT STARS with particular attention to increasing the supply and quality of early care and education for infants and toddlers.

2.2.5. Describe how the Lead Agency promotes access to the CCDF subsidy program? Check the strategies that will be implemented by your State/Territory.

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- Provide access to program office/workers such as by:
- Providing extended office hours
- Accepting applications at multiple office locations
- Providing a toll-free number for clients
- Email/online communication
- Other.

Describe:

Provide access to Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) applications and assistance in completing an application and navigating the application process and CCFAP program in Community Child Care Support Agencies located in communities throughout the state.

- Using a simplified eligibility determination process such as:
- Simplifying the application form (such as eliminating unnecessary questions, lowering the reading level)
- Developing a single application for multiple programs
- Developing web-based and/or phone-based application procedures
- Coordinating eligibility policies across programs.

List the program names: Reach Up (TANF), Family Services (protective services/child welfare) and Medical Assistance

- Streamlining verification procedures, such as linking to other program data systems
- Providing information multi-lingually
- Including temporary periods of unemployment in eligibility criteria for new applicants (job search, seasonal unemployment).

Length of time: 1 month with the ability to request two additional 1 month extensions within a calendar year.

(Note: this period of unemployment should be included in the Lead Agency's definition of working, or job training/educational program at 2.3.3).

- Other.

Describe:

Other.
Describe:

None

2.2.6. Describe the Lead Agencies policies to promote continuity of care for children and stability for families. Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

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Provide CCDF assistance during periods of job search.

Length of time: 1 month with the ability to request two additional 1 month extensions within a calendar year.

Establish two-tiered income eligibility to allow families to continue to receive child care subsidies if they experience an increase in income but still remain below 85% of State median income (SMI)

Synchronize review date across programs
List programs:

Longer eligibility re-determination periods (e.g., 1 year).

Describe:

Eligibility is approved for a period of 12 months.

Extend periods of eligibility for families who are also enrolled in either Early Head Start or Head Start and pre-k programs.

Describe:

Extend periods of eligibility for school-age children under age 13 to cover the school year.

Describe:

- Minimize reporting requirements for changes in family's circumstances that do not impact families' eligibility, such as changes in income below a certain threshold or change in employment
- Individualized case management to help families find and keep stable child care arrangements.

Describe:

The Community Child Care Support Agencies work directly with the family to identify alternative service need or other community supports when the family's service need or income changes. Child Care Referral and Resource agencies provide a child care referral specialist who is specially trained to help families search for child care when the family's child care is no longer available.

Using non-CCDF Funds to continue subsidy for families who no longer meet eligibility, such as for children who turn 13 years of age during the middle of a program year

Other.

Describe:

The CDD administers Strengthening Families grants to center based providers serving subsidized families to promote continuity of care in high quality settings. Strengthening Families centers may not require co-payments over and above subsidy for families eligible for full subsidy. They must have achieved and maintain a level of 3 STARS or higher. They must provide family support activities that promote child attendance and increase continuity of care. They receive specialized training in the Strengthening Families Framework (SFF) and must evaluate their programs annually using the SFF program evaluation tool and commit to continuously improve aspects of the program that promote continuity of care and protective factors in families.

None

2.2.7. How will the Lead Agency provide outreach and services to eligible families with limited English proficiency? Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

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- Application in other languages (application document, brochures, provider notices)
- Informational materials in non-English languages
- Training and technical assistance in non-English languages
- Website in non-English languages
- Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations
- Bilingual caseworkers or translators available
- Outreach Worker
- Other.

Describe:

None

If the Lead Agency checked any option above related to providing information or services in other non-English languages, please list the languages offered :

Spanish, French, Arabic, Vietnamese, Russian, Bosnian, Burmese, Somali, Swahili, and Nepalese.

2.2.8. How will the Lead Agency overcome language barriers with providers? Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory has chosen to implement.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

- Informational materials in non-English languages
- Training and technical assistance in non-English languages
- CCDF health and safety requirements in non-English languages
- Provider contracts or agreements in non-English languages
- Website in non-English languages
- Bilingual caseworkers or translators available
- Collect information to evaluate on-going need, recruit, or train a culturally or linguistically diverse workforce
- Other.

None

If the Lead Agency checked any option above related to providing information or services in other non-English languages, please list the languages offered:

Spanish, French, Arabic, Vietnamese, Russian, Bosnian, Burmese, Somali, Swahili, and Nepalese.

2.2.9. Describe how the Lead Agency documents and verifies applicant information using the table below. (§98.20(a))

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Check the strategies that will be implemented by your State/Territory. **Attach** a copy of your parent application for the child care subsidy program(s) as **Attachment 2.2.9** or provide a web address, if available: http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/child_care_financial_assistance

The Lead Agency requires documentation of:	Describe how the Lead Agency documents and verifies applicant information:
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applicant identity	Application self-declaration Verify SSN through direct interface with ESD benefit programs , , , if SSN provided
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Household composition	Application self-declaration – Cross reference with Economic Services Division (ESD) data
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applicant's relationship to the child	Application self-declaration – Cross reference with Economic Services Division (ESD) data
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Child's information for determining eligibility (e.g., identity, age, etc.)	Application self-declaration Verify SSN through direct interface with ESD benefit programs, if SSN provided
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work, Job Training or Educational Program	Request employment verification form, pay stubs, tax returns, school registration, grades.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Income	Request employment verification and or pay stub contracts, tax returns, child support disbursement history statement, court orders, letters from SSA as necessary depending on individual's service need. Check the interface with ESD
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other. Describe: Communication with other Departments, Division and Programs staff regarding adoption agreements, Reach Up participation, foster care, etc.	Communication with other Departments, Division and Programs staff regarding adoption agreements, Reach Up participation, foster care, etc.

2.2.10. Which strategies, if any, will the Lead Agency use to assure the timeliness of eligibility determinations upon receipt of applications?

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- Time limit for making eligibility determinations.

Describe length of time 7 business days to initiate determination process, 30 days to finish completed applications.

- Track and monitor the eligibility determination process

Other.

Describe

None

2.2.11. Are the policies, strategies or processes provided in questions 2.2.1 through 2.2.10 different for families receiving TANF? (658E(c)(2)(H) & (3)(D), §§98.16(g)(4), 98.33(b), 98.50(e))

Yes.

If yes, describe:

No.

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

The regulations at §98.33(b) require the Lead Agency to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child under 6 years of age. Lead Agencies must coordinate with TANF programs to ensure, pursuant that TANF families with young children will be informed of their right not to be sanctioned if they meet the criteria set forth by the State TANF agency in accordance with section 407(e)(2) of the Social Security Act. In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care.

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

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

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

State/Territory TANF Agency Department for Children and Families, Economic Services Division

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

- **"appropriate child care"**: An available child care slot with a licensed or registered provider within five miles of the parent or caretaker's residence or normal route to a program activity or employment that corresponds to the days and hours care is needed and the age of the child needing care; or the participant or caretaker chooses a legally exempt child care (LECC) provider who is in compliance with the law over a regulated child care provider.

- **"reasonable distance"**: Located within five miles of the parent or caretaker's residence or on route to a program activity or employment that corresponds to the days and hours care is needed and the age of the child needing care.

- **"unsuitability of informal child care"**: Child care that the Child Development Division (CDD) classifies as legally exempt child care (LECC), and that a participant or caretaker determines to be unacceptable; and child care that CDD classifies as either a registered family child care home or a licensed child care center, and that a participant or caretaker determines to be unacceptable, when such determination is confirmed by the CDD. If the only available child care is with a LECC provider, the participant or caretaker is not required to use it.

- **"affordable child care arrangements"**: Child care services by a provider that accepts the state

subsidy as full payment for services or charges a co-pay above the subsidized rate that the family can pay without hardship.

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

- In writing
- Verbally
- Other.

Describe:

2.3. Eligibility Criteria for Child Care

In order to be eligible for services, children must (1) be under the age of 13, or under the age of 19 if the child is physically or mentally disabled or under court supervision; (2) reside with a family whose income is less than 85 percent of the State's median income for a family of the same size; and (3) reside with a parent or parents who is working or attending job training or an educational program; or (4) be receiving or needs to receive protective services. (658P(3), §98.20(a))

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

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residing with -

living in the same household

in loco parentis -

an individual other than a parent, age 18 or older, fulfilling a parental role in caring for a dependent child by providing physical care, guidance and decision-making related to the child's health, school, medical care and discipline.

2.3.2. Eligibility Criteria Based Upon Age

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) The Lead Agency serves children from 6 weeks to 12 years (may not equal or exceed age 13).

b) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children age 13 and above but below age 19 years who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care? (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

Yes, and the upper age is 18 (may not equal or exceed age 19).
Provide the Lead Agency definition of *physical or mental incapacity* -

A physical or mental condition as documented by a physician/psychologist which prohibits the child from being able to safely care for him/herself

No.

c) Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children age 13 and above but below age 19 years who are under court supervision? (658P(3), 658E(c)(3)(B), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

Yes, and the upper age is (may not equal or exceed age 19).

No.

2.3.3. Eligibility Criteria Based Upon Work, Job Training or Educational Program

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) How does the Lead Agency define "working" for the purposes of eligibility? Provide a narrative description below, including allowable activities and if a minimum number of hours is required.

Reminder - Lead Agencies have the flexibility to include any work-related activities in its definition of working, including periods of job search and travel time. (§§98.16(f)(3), 98.20(b))
working-

Employment: involvement in an activity, either in or out of the home, through which hourly compensation of at least minimum wage is received. (no minimum hours) This includes activity related to employment, including hours of rest or sleep, as needed for 2nd or 3rd shift employment or training and may include not more than two hours a day travel time.

Self Employment: business activity, either in or out of the home, through an average monthly net income equivalent to the number of hours worked times the Vermont minimum wage is earned. May include not more than two hours a day travel time between the child care facility and the place of employment including the home if the business is run from the family's primary residence.

Start Up Self Employment. An activity determined as likely to lead to self-employment within one year. Earning minimum wage is not required during this period. May include not more than two hours a day travel time between the child care facility and place of employment including the home if the business is run from the family's primary residence.

Seeking Employment: Involvement in activities generally recognized as necessary to obtain employment or training leading to employment. Families seeking employment may receive child care financial assistance for a period of one month unless the period is extended by the Commissioner or designee. Applicants are able to request two additional 1 month extensions in a 12 month period.

b) Does the Lead Agency provide CCDF child care assistance to parents who are attending job training or an educational program? (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

Yes.

If yes, how does the Lead Agency define "attending job training or educational program" for the purposes of eligibility? Provide a narrative description below.

Reminder - Lead Agencies have the flexibility to include any training or education-related activities in its definition of job training or education, including study time and travel time.

attending job training or educational program -

Demonstrated participation in a program which is likely to lead to employment within one year after completion of the program. This need can also be established if the training or education program is required to maintain employment. Approved training programs include, without limitation, the following:

- Work programs, training programs, and other activities approved by DCF's Economic Services Division as part of the caretaker's family development plan;
- Work or training programs approved by the Department of Labor;
- Work study programs or training programs related to employment;
- High school, public or private, and high school equivalency programs such as Adult Basic Education (ABE) or General Equivalency Diploma (GED);
- Post-secondary courses at an accredited or recognized institution of higher education offering certification or associate and bachelor degree course work;
- Non-traditional and/or on line training approved on an individual basis; and
- Community service time/training.

Authorization of child care financial assistance is limited to the number of days and hours related to training or education and may include travel time up to two hours per day. Volunteer work and post-bachelor education are not eligible activities.

No.

2.3.4. Eligibility Criteria Based Upon Receiving or Needing to Receive Protective Services

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) Does the Lead Agency provide child care to children in protective services? (§§98.16(f)(7), 98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A) & (B))

Yes.

If yes, how does the Lead Agency define "protective services" for the purposes of eligibility? Provide a narrative description below.

Reminder - Lead Agencies have the flexibility to define protective services beyond formal child welfare or foster care cases. Lead Agencies may elect to include homeless children and other vulnerable populations in the definition of protective services.

Note - If the Lead Agency elects to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care whose foster care parents are not working, or who are not in education/training activities for CCDF purposes these children are considered to be in protective services and should be included in this definition.

protective services

A set of personalized and planned child development services designed to intervene positively in a child's life.

Subsidized early care and education may be used as an intervention and safety strategy that promotes child development in the implementation of the Department for Children and Families, Family Services Division (DCF FSD) case plan for children in state custody in foster care or in the custody of biological parents or kith and kin caregivers.

Early care and education may also be authorized as a prevention and early intervention service designed to reduce stress for families and their children and promote positive child development while avoiding the intervention of the DCF FSD. This may be authorized after a confidential application and risk assessment has been completed by the local Children's Integrated Services Team.

No.

b) Does the Lead Agency waive, on a case-by-case basis, the co-payment and income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services? (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3)(C)(ii), §98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A))

Yes.

No.

2.3.5. Income Eligibility Criteria

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) How does the Lead Agency define "income" for the purposes of eligibility? Provide the Lead Agency's definition of "income" for purposes of eligibility determination. (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

income -

The total (gross) monthly income received by a child and her/his primary caregivers which is derived from any source except for the following noted in below in section "b".

b) Which of the following sources of income, if any, will the Lead Agency exclude or deduct from calculations of total family income for the purposes of eligibility determination? Check any income the Lead Agency chooses to exclude or deduct, if any.

- Adoption subsidies
- Foster care payments
- Alimony received or paid
- Child support received
- Child support paid
- Federal nutrition programs
- Federal tax credits
- State/Territory tax credits
- Housing allotments, Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or energy assistance
- Medical expenses or health insurance related expenses
- Military housing or other allotment/bonuses
- Scholarships, education loans, grants, income from work study
- Social Security Income
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Veteran's benefits
- Unemployment Insurance
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Worker Compensation
- Other types of income not listed above:

withdrawal from bank deposits, money borrowed, self employment expenses, military pay for primary caregivers deployed on active duty

None

c) Whose income will be excluded, if any, for purposes of eligibility determination? Check anyone the Lead Agency chooses to exclude, if any.

- Children under age 18
- Children age 18 and over - still attending school
- Teen parents
- Unrelated members of household
- All members of household except for parents/legal guardians
- Other.

Describe:

None

d) Provide the CCDF income eligibility limits in the table below. **Complete** columns (a) and (b) based upon maximum eligibility initial entry into the CCDF program. Complete Columns (c) and (d) **ONLY IF** the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85% of the SMI.

Reminder - Income limits must be provided in terms of State Median Income (SMI) (or Territory Median Income) even if federal poverty level is used in implementing the program. (§98.20(a)(2)). FY 2013 poverty guidelines are available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/13poverty.shtml>.

Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI)(\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI)(\$/month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	IF APPLICABLE Income Level if lower than 85% SMI	
			(c) \$/month	(d) % of SMI [Divide (c) by (a), multiply by 100]
1	n/a	NaN		
2	n/a	NaN		
3	5698.56	4844	3255	57
4	6784	5766	3925	58
5	7869.05	6689	4595	58

e) Will the Lead Agency have "tiered eligibility" (i.e., a separate income limit at re-determination to remain eligible for the CCDF program)?

Yes.

If yes, provide the requested information from the table in 2.3.5d and **describe below**:

Note: This information can be included in the table below.

No.

Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)[Multiply (a) by 0.85]	IF APPLICABLE Income Level if lower than 85% SMI	
			(c) \$/month	(d) % of SMI[Divide (c) by (a), multiply by 100]
1				

2				
3				
4				
5				

f) SMI Year Estimate and SMI Source ACF Federal Register Vol 78, No 94, 5/15/2013
 d
 FFY2014
 LIHEAP

g) These eligibility limits in column (c) became or will become effective on:
 July 1, 2013

2.3.6. Eligibility Re-determination

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Does the State/Territory follow OCC's 12 month re-determination recommendation? (See Program Instruction on Continuity of Care

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/im2011-06>

Yes

No. If no, what is the re-determination period in place for most families?

6 months

24 months

Other.

Describe:

Length of eligibility varies by county or other jurisdiction.

Describe:

b) Does the Lead Agency coordinate or align re-determination periods with other programs?

Yes. If yes, **check programs that the Lead Agency aligns eligibility periods with and describe the redetermination period for each.**

Head Start and/or Early Head Start Programs.

Re-determination period:

Pre-kindergarten programs.

Re-determination period:

TANF.

Re-determination period:

SNAP.

Re-determination period:

Medicaid.

Re-determination period:

SCHIP.

SCHIP.

Re-determination period:

Other.

Describe:

No.

c) Describe under what circumstances, if any, a family's eligibility would be reviewed prior to redetermination. For example, regularly scheduled interim assessments, or a requirement for families to report changes.

It is the family's responsibility to report any changes that may affect their eligibility (e.g., change in family composition, income, etc.).

d) Describe any action(s) the State/Territory would take in response to any change in a family's eligibility circumstances prior to re-determination

If the change decreases the financial assistance, the change becomes effective 1 month from the date of notice to give the family time to prepare for the reduction in their benefit. If the change benefits the family, eligibility is updated immediately.

e) Describe how these policies are implemented in a family-friendly manner that promotes access and continuity of care for children. (See Information Memorandum on Continuity of Care for examples <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/im2011-06>).

CC FAP promotes continuity of care for children through the following:

- Extending the duration of eligibility to 12 months
- Allowing the family to self-report any changes that may affect their eligibility
- Providing payment for up to two (2) pay periods when a parent has a temporary lapse of eligibility such as job loss or a break in school schedule, provided the required documentation established by the CDD has been submitted by the parent/primary caretaker

f) Does the Lead Agency use a simplified process at re-determination?

Yes.

If yes, describe:

No.

2.3.7. Waiting Lists

Describe the Lead Agency's waiting list status. Select **ONE** of these options.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Lead Agency currently does not have a waiting list and:

All eligible families *who apply* will be served under State/Territory eligibility rules

Not all eligible families *who apply* will be served under State/Territory eligibility rules

Lead Agency has an active waiting list for:

Any eligible family who applies when they cannot be served at the time of application

Only certain eligible families.

Describe those families:

Waiting lists are a county/local decision.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

2.3.8. Appeal Process for Eligibility Determinations

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Describe the process for families to appeal eligibility determinations:

If an application for the CC Financial Assistance Program (CC FAP) is denied or the applicant is dissatisfied with the level of eligibility determination, the eligibility decision may be appealed. Eligible families have the right to appeal the amount of financial assistance authorized, a change in the amount of assistance authorized or the determination of service need. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Child Development Division (CDD) within 30 days of a decision. The CDD will conduct a Commissioner's Review and determine if CC FAP rules were correctly applied. If the appellant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the Commissioner's Review, they may pursue a request for a Fair Hearing with the Human Services Board within 30 days of the CDD determination as provided for in state statute. A Hearing Officer will then review the decision and render a written recommendation to the Human Services Board. The Human Services Board shall conduct a Fair Hearing according to its Rules and shall issue the final decision.

Unless initial eligibility is denied, subsidy to a family will continue during period(s) of appeal.

2.4. Sliding Fee Scale and Family Contribution

The statute and regulations require Lead Agencies to establish a sliding fee scale that varies based on income and the size of the family to be used in determining each family's contribution (i.e., co-payment) to the cost of child care (658E(c)(3)(B) §98.42).

2.4.1. Attach a copy of the sliding fee scale as Attachment 2.4.1. Will the attached sliding fee scale be used in all parts of the State/Territory?

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Yes.

Effective Date: July 1, 2013

No. If no, attach other sliding fee scales and their effective date(s) as **Attachment 2.4.1a, 2.4.1b**, etc.

2.4.2. What income source and year will be used in creating the sliding fee scale? (658E(c)(3)(B)) Check only one option..

State Median Income,

Year:

Federal Poverty Level,

Year: 2013

Income source and year varies by geographic region.

Describe income source and year:

Other.

Describe income source and year:

2.4.3. How will the family's contribution be calculated and to whom will it be applied? Check all that the Lead Agency has chosen to use. (§98.42(b))

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Fee as dollar amount and

Fee is per child with the same fee for each child

Fee is per child and discounted fee for two or more children

Fee is per child up to a maximum per family

No additional fee charged after certain number of children

Fee is per family

Fee as percent of income and

Fee is per child with the same percentage applied for each child

Fee is per child and discounted percentage applied for two or more children

No additional percentage applied charged after certain number of children

Fee per family

Contribution schedule varies by geographic area.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

Fee as percent of benefit (rate paid by state for age of child/type of provider/quality rating of provider/amount of time authorized). Fee is per child with the same percent of benefit applied for each child.

If the Lead Agency checked more than one of the options above, describe:

2.4.4. Will the Lead Agency use other factors in addition to income and family size to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.42(b))

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Yes,
and describe those additional factors:

No.

2.4.5. The Lead Agency may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size. (§98.42(c)). Select ONE of these options.

Reminder - Lead Agencies are reminded that the co-payments may be waived for only two circumstances - for families at or below the poverty level or on a case-by-case basis for children falling under the definition of "protective services" (as defined in 2.3.4.a).

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

ALL families, including those with incomes at or below the poverty level for families of the same size, ARE required to pay a fee.

NO families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE required to pay a fee.

The poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family of 3 is: 1628

SOME families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee.

The Lead Agency waives the fee for the following families:

2.5. Prioritizing Services for Eligible Children and Families

At a minimum, CCDF requires Lead Agencies to give priority for child care assistance to children with special needs, or in families with very low incomes. Prioritization of CCDF assistance services is not limited to eligibility determination (i.e., establishment of a waiting list or ranking of eligible families in priority order to be served). Lead Agencies may fulfill priority requirements in other ways such as higher payment rates for providers caring for children with special needs or waiving co-payments for families with very low incomes (at or below the federal poverty level). (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.44)

2.5.1. How will the Lead Agency prioritize child care services to children with special needs or in families with very low incomes? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.44) Lead Agencies have the discretion to define *children with special needs* and *children in families with very low incomes*. Lead Agencies are not limited in defining *children with special needs* to only those children with physical or mental disabilities (e.g., with a formal Individual Education Plan (IEP) required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)). Lead Agencies could consider children in the child welfare system, children of teen parents, or homeless children as examples of *children with special needs*.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

How will the Lead Agency prioritize CCDF services for:	Eligibility Priority (Check only one)	Is there a time limit on the eligibility priority or guarantee?	Other Priority Rules
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<p>Children with special needs</p> <p>Provide the Lead Agency definition of <i>Children with Special Needs</i>:</p> <p>Child has a significant health or specialized developmental need as documented by a licensed physician and/or licensed psychologist or by the assessment determining eligibility for Special Education or Early Intervention Services that includes child care</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Priority over other CCDF-eligible families</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same priority as other CCDF-eligible families</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Guaranteed subsidy eligibility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other.</p> <p>Describe:</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p>The time limit is:</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Different eligibility thresholds.</p> <p>Describe:</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Higher rates for providers caring for children with special needs requiring additional care</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prioritizes quality funds for providers serving these children</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other.</p> <p>Describe:</p> <p><input type="text"/></p>
<p>Children in families with very low incomes</p> <p>Provide the Lead Agency definition of <i>Children in Families with Very Low Incomes</i>:</p> <p>Children eligible for 100% benefit on the CC FAP Sliding Fee Scale (at or below 100% 2013 FPL). Priority rules in this category also apply to eligible children in families receiving TANF benefits.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Priority over other CCDF-eligible families</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Same priority as other CCDF-eligible families</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Guaranteed subsidy eligibility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other.</p> <p>Describe:</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes.</p> <p>The time limit is:</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Different eligibility thresholds.</p> <p>Describe:</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Waiving co-payments for families with incomes at or below the Federal Poverty Level</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other.</p> <p>Describe:</p> <p>The State does not impose a co-payment however, if a provider charges more than the State subsidy rate, the parent is responsible for that copayment to that provider.</p>

2.5.2. How will CCDF funds be used to provide child care assistance to meet the needs of families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and those at risk of

becoming dependent on TANF? (658E(c)(2)(H), Section 418(b)(2) of the Social Security Act, §§98.50(e), 98.16(g)(4)) **Reminder** - CCDF requires that not less than 70 percent of CCDF Mandatory and Matching funds be used to provide child care assistance for families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

- Use priority rules to meet the needs of TANF families (describe in 2.5.1 or 2.5.3.)
- Waive fees (co-payments) for some or all TANF families who are below poverty level
- Coordinate with other entities (i.e. TANF office, other State/Territory agencies, and contractors)
- Other.

Describe:

Require Strengthening Families center based grantees to waive any cost sharing requirements for families at or below 100% of poverty, receiving TANF benefits, or in protective services.

2.5.3. List and define any other eligibility conditions, priority rules and definitions that will be established by the Lead Agency. (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b)) **Reminder** - Lead Agencies are reminded that any eligibility criteria and terms provided below must comply with the eligibility requirements of §98.20 and provided in section 2.2. Any priority rules provided must comply with the priority requirements of §98.44 and provided in section 2.4.1.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Term(s) - Definition(s)

Describe:

N/A

2.6. Parental Choice In Relation to Certificates, Grants or Contracts

The parent(s) of each eligible child who receives or is offered financial assistance for child care services has the option of either enrolling such child with a provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of service or receiving a child care certificate.

(658E(c)(2)(A), §98.15(a))

2.6.1. Child Care Certificates

a) When is the child care certificate (also referred to as voucher or authorization) issued to parents? (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii), 658P(2), §98.2, §98.30(c)(4) & (e)(1) & (2))

- Before parent has selected a provider
- After parent has selected a provider
- Other.

Describe:

b) How does the Lead Agency inform parents that the child care certificate permits them to choose from a variety of child care categories, including child care centers, child care group homes, family child care homes, and in-home providers? (§98.30(e)(2))

- Certificate form provides information about choice of providers
- Certificate is not linked to a specific provider so parents can choose provider of choice
- Consumer education materials (flyers, forms, brochures)
- Referral to child care resource and referral agencies
- Verbal communication at the time of application
- Public Services Announcement
- Agency

Website: <http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd>

- Community outreach meetings, workshops, other in person activities
- Multiple points of communication throughout the eligibility and renew process
- Other.

Describe:

c) What information is included on the child care certificate? **Attach a copy of the child care certificate as Attachment 2.6.1.** (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii))

- Authorized provider(s)
- Authorized payment rate(s)
- Authorized hours
- Co-payment amount
- Authorization period
- Other.

Describe:

Amount of care authorized (part time or full time)

d) What is the estimated proportion of services that will be available for child care services through certificates?

100%

2.6.2. Child Care Services Available through Grants or Contracts

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency provide child care services through grants or contracts for child care slots? (658A(b)(1), 658P(4), §§98.16(g)(1), 98.30(a)(1) & (b)). **Note:** Do not check "yes" if every provider is simply required to sign an agreement in order to be paid in the certificate program.

Yes.

If yes, **describe** the type(s) of child care services available through grants or contracts, the process for accessing grants or contracts, and the range of providers that will be available through grants or contracts:

No. If no, skip to 2.6.3

b) Will the Lead Agency use grants or contracts for child care services to achieve any of the following? Check the strategies, if any, that your State/Territory chooses to implement.

- Increase the supply of specific types of care
- Programs to serve children with special needs
- Wrap-around or integrated child care in Head Start, Early Head Start, pre-k, summer or other programs
- Programs to serve infant/toddler
- School-age programs
- Center-based providers
- Family child care providers
- Group-home providers
- Programs that serve specific geographic areas
- Urban
- Rural
- Other.

Describe:

- Support programs in providing higher quality services
- Support programs in providing comprehensive services
- Serve underserved families.

Specify:

- Other.

Describe:

c) Are child care services provided through grants or contracts offered throughout the State/Territory? (658E(a), §98.16(g)(3))

- Yes.

- No,

and **identify** the localities (political subdivisions) and services that are not offered:

d) How are payment rates for child care services provided through grants/contracts determined?

e) What is the estimated proportion of direct services that will be available for child care services through grants/contracts?

2.6.3. How will the Lead Agency inform parents and providers of policies and procedures for affording parents unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds? (658E(c)(2)(B), §98.31)) Check the strategies that will be implemented by your State/Territory.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

- Signed declaration
- Parent Application
- Parent Orientation
- Provider Agreement
- Provider Orientation
- Other.

Describe:

Parent materials, CCR&R guidance and training and information on agency website

2.6.4. The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care (i.e., care provided in the child's own home) but may limit its use. (§§98.16(g)(2), 98.30(e)(1)(iv)) Will the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

- No
- Yes. If checked, what limits will the Lead Agency set on the use of in-home care?
Check all limits the Lead Agency will establish.
 - Restricted based on minimum number of children in the care of the provider to meet minimum wage law or Fair Labor Standards Act
 - Restricted based on provider meeting a minimum age requirement
 - Restricted based on hours of care (certain number of hours, non-traditional work hours)
 - Restricted to care by relatives
 - Restricted to care for children with special needs or medical condition
 - Restricted to in-home providers that meet some basic health and safety requirements
 - Other.

Describe:

2.6.5. Describe how the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints about providers and makes substantiated parental complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C), §98.32)

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

DCF, as the lead agency for the CCDF, staffs the Consumer Education Line. This line is staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and voice mail assures 24 hour a day, 7 day a week phone access, for anyone wishing to leave information related to a complaint or wanting information on the regulatory status of a child care provider.

The staff for the Consumer Education Line register all complaints. If the complaint is of a nature that would indicate a potential regulatory violation, the complaint is referred to a licenser for follow-up. If the complaint is substantiated, the substantiation is part of the permanent public record, which is available for review upon request. Information on substantiated regulatory violations is given over the phone by the Consumer Education Specialist. All substantiated regulatory history information is also available on line through the BFIS system for the public to access.

Regulatory and complaint information is maintained on all providers who are subject to regulation under Vermont law.

The Consumer Education Line also serves as a statewide vehicle for education about what is quality care and how to locate it. The Consumer Education Line is a 1-800 number, which is published in a variety of brochures and information packets and distributed by state agency staff, CCCSAs and other community partners.

2.7. Payment Rates for Child Care Services

The statute at 658E(c)(4) and the regulations at §98.43(b)(1) require the Lead Agency to establish adequate payment rates for child care services that ensure eligible children equal access to comparable care.

2.7.1. Attach a copy of your payment rates as Attachment 2.7.1. Will the attached payment rates be used in all parts of the State/Territory?

Effective Date: 03-NOV-13

Yes. Effective Date: November 3, 2013

No. If no, attach other payment rates and their effective date(s) as **Attachment 2.7.1a, 2.7.1b, etc.**, etc.

2.7.2. Which strategies, if any, will the Lead Agency use to ensure the timeliness of payments?

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Policy on length of time for making payments.

Describe length of time: Providers are paid every two weeks for care provided and reported for a two week period three weeks prior to payment. Payments are run every week in order to pick up payments

Track and monitor the payment process

Other.

Describe:

Use of an automated attendance reporting and payment system that simplifies attendance reporting and significantly reduces time between provider reporting and payment

None

2.7.3. Market Rate Survey

Lead Agencies must complete a local Market Rate Survey (MRS) no earlier than two years prior to the effective date of the Plan (no earlier than October 1, 2009). The MRS must be completed prior to the submission of the CCDF Plan (see Program Instruction CCDF-ACF-PI-2009-02 <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/pi-2009-02> for more information on the MRS deadline).

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) Provide the month and year when the local Market Rate Survey(s) was completed (§98.43(b)(2)): 10/2012

b) Provide a summary of the results of the survey.

The summary should include a description of the sample population, data source, the type of methodology used, response rate, description of analyses, and key findings.

Child Care Market Rate Survey was completed in October 2012 based on the market rates of programs collected through the state's child care database, Bright Futures Information System (BFIS). All regulated programs are encouraged to submit their rates to BFIS and the participation rate was 68% of licensed centers and 90% of registered home based programs. BFIS collects rates based on set schedules of part time day, full time day, part time week, full time week and extended care rates. Programs submit their rates to the state to be entered into BFIS and provide their rate for the set schedule. The 2012 Child Care Market Rate Survey found that overall The survey indicated an overall increase of rates charged to families across provider types. Licensed program rates increased an average of 5% from 2010, while registered home programs increased an average of 7%. It also found that the 2012 Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) base rate for licensed programs was at the 12th percentile of the market rate for preschool age children, while the 2012 state 4 STAR rate for licensed programs was at the 45th percentile. The 2012 Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) base rate for registered home programs was at the 1st percentile of the market rate for preschool age children, while the 2012 state 4 STAR rate for registered home programs was at the 47th percentile.

2.7.4. Describe the payment rate ceilings in relation to the current MRS using the tables below.

Effective Date: 03-NOV-13

2.7.4a - Highest Rate Area (Centers)	(a) Monthly Payment Rate at the 75th percentile from the most recent MRS	(b) Monthly Maximum Payment Rate Ceiling	(c) Percentile if lower than 75th percentile of most recent survey
Full-Time Licensed Center Infants (11 months)	\$974.25	\$611.61	20.45%
Full-Time Licensed Center Preschool (59 months)	\$866.00	\$578.01	14.68%
Full-Time Licensed Center School-Age (84 months)	\$838.94	\$560.65	16.26%

2.7.4b - Lowest Rate Area (Centers)	(a) Monthly Payment Rate at the 75th percentile from the most recent MRS	(b) Monthly Maximum Payment Rate Ceiling	(c) Percentile if lower than 75th percentile of most recent survey
Full-Time Licensed Center Infants (11 months)	\$974.25	\$611.61	20.45%
Full-Time Licensed Center Preschool (59 months)	\$866.00	\$578.01	14.68%
Full-Time Licensed Center School-Age (84 months)	\$838.94	\$560.65	16.26%

2.7.4c - Highest Rate Area (FCC)	(a) Monthly Payment Rate at the 75th percentile from the most recent MRS	(b) Monthly Maximum Payment Rate Ceiling	(c) Percentile if lower than 75th percentile of most recent survey
Full-Time Licensed FCC Infants (11 months)	\$692.80	\$509.73	5.09%
Full-Time Licensed FCC Preschool (59 months)	\$649.50	\$440.92	1.96%
Full-Time Licensed FCC School-Age (84 months)	\$649.50	\$424.30	8.49%

2.7.4d - Lowest Rate Area (FCC)	(a) Monthly Payment Rate at the 75th percentile from the most recent MRS	(b) Monthly Maximum Payment Rate Ceiling	(c) Percentile if lower than 75th percentile of most recent survey
Full-Time Licensed FCC Infants (11 months)	\$692.80	\$509.73	5.09%
Full-Time Licensed FCC Preschool (59 months)	\$649.50	\$440.92	1.96%
Full-Time Licensed FCC School-Age (84 months)	\$649.50	\$424.30	8.49%

2.7.5. How are payment rate ceilings for license-exempt providers set?

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) Describe how license-exempt center payment rates are set:

NA

b) Describe how license-exempt family child care home payment rates are set:

Anyone providing care for children from more than two families in the state of Vermont is required to be regulated, without exception. All center based programs are regulated.

The CDD has established a daily rate of reimbursement for all legally exempt providers (ie: non regulated family, friend or neighbor caring for children from no more than two families) identified by families and approved by the Division. In 2005 when Vermont moved from daily rates to weekly rates for regulated child care providers, (Licensed and Registered), the daily rates remained in effect for LECC's. They have never had an increase since 2005. The original rates were set below the, at that time, lowest regulated provider setting with the intent of providing an incentive to LECCs to become regulated.

http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/child_care_financial_assistance/forms

*Reimbursement Rates for Legally-Exempt Providers
Effective January 3, 2010 Daily Rates at 100%*

<i>Age Category</i>	<i>Part Time</i>	<i>Full Time</i>	<i>Extended Time</i>
<i>Infant</i>	<i>9.16</i>	<i>16.03</i>	<i>22.40</i>
<i>Toddler</i>	<i>9.16</i>	<i>16.03</i>	<i>22.40</i>
<i>Preschool</i>	<i>7.84</i>	<i>13.39</i>	<i>18.44</i>
<i>School Age</i>	<i>7.84</i>	<i>13.39</i>	<i>18.44</i>

c) Describe how license-exempt group family child care home payment rates are set:

d) Describe how in-home care payment rates are set:

Anyone providing care for children from more than two families in the state of Vermont is required to be regulated, without exception. All center based programs are regulated. The CDD has established a daily rate of reimbursement for all legally exempt providers (ie: non regulated family, friend or neighbor caring for children from no more than two families) identified by families and approved by the Division. In 2005 when Vermont moved from daily rates to weekly rates for regulated child care providers, (Licensed and Registered), the daily rates remained in effect for LECC's. They have never had an increase since 2005. The original rates were set below the, at that time, lowest regulated provider setting with the intent of providing an incentive to LECCs to become regulated.

http://dcf.vermont.gov/cdd/child_care_financial_assistance/forms

Reimbursement Rates for Legally-Exempt Providers
Effective January 3, 2010 Daily Rates at 100%

Age Category	Part Time	Full Time	Extended Time
Infant	9.16	16.03	22.40
Toddler	9.16	16.03	22.40
Preschool	7.84	13.39	18.44
School Age	7.84	13.39	18.44

2.7.6. Will the Lead Agency provide any type of tiered reimbursement or differential rates on top of its base reimbursement rates for providing care for children receiving CCDF subsidies? Check which types of tiered reimbursement, if any, the Lead Agency has chosen to implement. In the description of any tiered rates or add-ons, indicate the process and basis used for determining the tiered rates and amount and also indicate if the rates were set based on the MRS or another process.

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Differential rate for nontraditional hours.

Describe:

Differential rate for children with special needs as defined by the State/Territory.

Describe:

Approved Specialized CC Services CC providers serving children with identified special needs as described in 2.5.1 receive a 7% differential in payment rates (this includes children in protective services)

Differential rate for infants and toddlers.

Describe:

Differential rate for school-age programs.

Describe:

Differential rate for higher quality as defined by the State/Territory.

Describe:

see tiered reimbursement based on documentation of quality through participation in the Vermont Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS):

1 star: 5% above base

2 stars: 10% above base

3 stars: 20% above base

4 stars: 30% above base

5 stars: 40% above base

Other differential rate.

Describe:

None.

Reminder - CCDF regulations require the Lead Agency to certify that the payment rates for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services comparable to those provided to families not eligible to receive CCDF assistance. In the next three questions, Lead Agencies are asked to describe how their payment policies reflect the affordable copayments for families provision of equal access (i.e., minimizing additional fees to parents), how payment practices are implemented consistent with the general child care market to be fair to providers (see Information Memorandum on Continuity of Care for examples <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/im2011-06>), and the summary of facts describing how payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access to the full range of providers.

2.7.7. What policies does the Lead Agency have regarding any additional fees that providers may charge CCDF parents? The Lead Agency...

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Allows providers to charge the difference between the maximum reimbursement rate and their private pay rate

Pays for provider fees (e.g., registration, meals, supplies).

Describe:

Policies vary across region, counties and or geographic areas.

Describe:

Other.

Describe:

2.7.8 What specific policies and practices does the Lead Agency have regarding the following:

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) Number of absent days allowed. Describe

Child Sick Days - Unlimited; Child Vacation Days - 10 days per fiscal year (July-June); Provider Closed Days - 15 days per fiscal year (July-June)

b) Paying based on enrollment. Describe

Providers must develop a record keeping system for each child's attendance and record dates and actual hours for each eligible subsidy child. The subsidy payment is based on the child's authorized hours and the attendance submitted.

c) Paying on the same schedule that providers charge private pay families (e.g., hourly, weekly, monthly). Describe

Providers submit attendance for two-week intervals called service periods. Service periods are fixed and cover the fiscal year (July-June).

d) Using electronic tools(automated billing, direct deposit, EBT cards, etc.) to make provider payments. Describe

Providers may sign up to become an e-provider and complete their attendance reports on-line. Providers also have the option to have their payment direct deposited.

2.7.9. Describe how payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access to the full range of providers based on the Market Rate Survey.

CCDF regulations require the Lead Agency to certify that the payment rates for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services comparable to those provided to families not eligible to receive CCDF assistance. To demonstrate equal access, the Lead Agency shall provide at a minimum a summary of facts describing: (§98.43(a))

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

a) How a choice of the full range of providers, e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, group child care homes and in-home care, is made available (§98.43(a)(1)):

All families are allowed to select any regulated provider of any type in good standing or a family member, friend, or neighbor who meets the minimum health and safety qualifications required to serve as their legally exempt provider in the CC FAP to care for their children. Our tiered reimbursement rates are structured so that higher quality care, as indicated by STARS ratings of 3 or higher, is as affordable as unrated or legally exempt care for low income families. We have established payment policies that reflect industry standards and payment practices that reimburse providers for services proximal to the time of delivery thus increasing the number of providers who are willing to serve families receiving child care assistance.

b) How payment rates are adequate based on the most recent local MRS (§98.43(a)(2)):

Vermont last rate increase was in January of 2010. For State Fiscal Year 2013 the Governor's budget proposed increasing CCFAP rates to align with the results of the 2010 MRS. Sufficient funds were not appropriated by the legislature to reach that goal. Funds were appropriated to increase the base rate by 3% starting in November 2013. Funds were also appropriated to adjust the sliding fee scale to current Federal Poverty levels (2013).

CCFAP data shows that more providers serving subsidized children are entering and improving ratings in STARS thus capturing higher rates of reimbursement and that the number of subsidized children in higher quality care as indicated by a rating of 3 STARS or higher, is also increasing. We are continuing to encourage and support that trend. The average cost per case in the CC Financial Assistance Program has risen steadily and DCF annually requests and receives CCFAP budget increases to support the tiered reimbursement system.

c) How family co-payments based on a sliding fee scale are affordable (§98.43(a)(3)):

Very low income families receiving 90 – 100% of the Vermont CC Financial Assistance Program benefit typically pay significantly less than 10% of family income for child care services.

Vermont structures the financial assistance sliding fee scale to address a cliff effect for families transitioning off of financial assistance for child care.

d) Any additional facts the Lead Agency considered to determine that its payment rates ensure equal access, including how the quality of child care providers is taken into account when setting rates and whether any other methodologies (e.g., cost estimation models) are used in setting payment rates

2.8 Goals for the next Biennium - In this section, Lead Agencies are asked to identify at least one goal for the upcoming biennium and are encouraged to identify no more than five priority goals total. ACF will target technical assistance efforts to help Lead Agencies achieve their goal(s). Lead Agencies may include existing goals (e.g., already identified in a State strategic plan or established by the Governor for a Lead Agency). Lead Agencies will report progress and updates on these goals in the annual Quality Performance Report (Appendix 1), including any barriers encountered.

What are the Lead Agency's goals for the administration of the CCDF subsidy program in the coming Biennium? For example, what progress does the State/Territory expect to make on continuing improved services to parents and providers, continuity of care for children, improving outreach to parents and providers, building or expanding information technology systems, or revising rate setting policies or practices).

Note -When identifying your goals below, Lead Agencies are encouraged to begin with an action verb reflecting the desired result over the two year period (e.g., Increase, Improve, Build, Align, Implement, Review, Revise, Streamline, Expand, etc.)

Effective Date: 01-OCT-13

Goal #1:

Explore the efficacy and value added of using contracts to support child care subsidies in high quality Strengthening Families programs.

Goal #2: