

Innovation in Tribal Child Care

**Supporting Tribal CCDF Administrators
in Their ARPA Administration**



First Children's Finance

Your partner in growing a sustainable child care supply.



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First Children's Finance is the only national organization focused exclusively on a sustainable child care supply.

Purpose

The Innovation in Tribal Child Care Convenings were launched as a system of support and learning for tribal CCDF administrators working to effectively and successfully use ARPA funding to strengthen child care in their tribal communities.

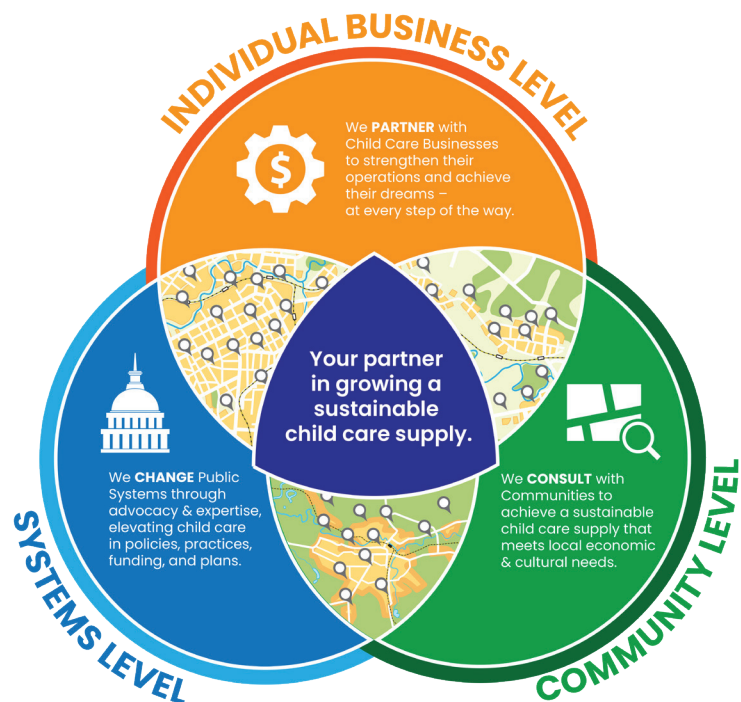
The Convening Series was envisioned as an opportunity to support peer-to-peer learning for tribal CCDF administrators, allowing CCDF administrators from different tribes to share with each other how they are spending their American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding.

The series was also an opportunity to highlight instances of child care business innovation within tribes, allow participants to ask questions about ARPA funding implementation from leaders in the field, and gather stories about obstacles so future funding opportunities could be informed by these learnings.

First Children's Finance (FCF) partners with state, tribal, and federal systems to improve the sustainability of child care businesses. FCF knows that tribes are uniquely positioned to make significant improvements to the early care and education delivery system that directly impact the availability of high quality culturally appropriate child care in tribal communities.

FCF believes tribes have an opportunity to lead the way in effective ARPA implementation and can be positioned as national leaders in child care system improvement.

First Children's Finance partners with leaders to create systems that improve sustainability of child care businesses.



Need

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which compounded an already struggling early care and education system and national child care crisis, the Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) released American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds with resources for states, Head Start programs, and Tribal CCDF and other early childhood education programs to invest in supporting child care at the state and tribal level.

Given the incredible opportunity this one time pandemic-relief funding presented for tribes to strengthen their community's child care infrastructure, FCF identified the need to develop a collective understanding of the opportunities and challenges of using ARPA funding to support child care in tribal nations and provide pragmatic ARPA implementation guidance to tribes.

Activities

In 2022, First Children's Finance (FCF), conducted activities, including a survey and a series of convenings with tribal CCDF administrators whose Native nations and tribal communities share the same geography as the Upper Midwest of the United States.

The focus of the survey was to hear from tribal CCDF administrators regarding the challenges experienced using ARPA funds to support child care, questions about the funding, and strategies used by tribes to use ARPA funding to support child care.

Within the convening series, an innovative, collaborative process was used to provide big thinking and pragmatic ARPA implementation guidance to tribes. These events featured working sessions for tribes to connect with one another and tribal child care experts from Native nations across the country. A facilitated process was used to capture challenges, innovations, and promising practices, followed by virtual implementation support sessions for tribal CCDF administrators throughout 2022.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to all who participated in the surveys and sessions, sharing their insights and experiences to inform learnings for the future. We'd like to recognize our wonderful speakers: Govinda Budrow, Barb Fabre, Heidi Hagel Braid, Kim Lage, Anne McSweeney, Dr. Jennifer Mueller, Kim Nall, Ellen Nikodym, Gail Spotted Tail, Molly Sullivan, and Allicia Waukau-Butler. We offer a special thanks to Grace López, FCF's National Program Assistant, for organizing the sessions.



Tribal CCDF Administrator Survey

In March 2022, FCF launched a survey for tribal Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) administrators whose native nations and tribal communities share the same geography as the Upper Midwest of the United States.

FCF conducted this survey to better understand the innovative ways that tribes were using ARPA funding, the unique challenges that tribes were experiencing, and to identify unanswered ARPA implementation questions. The survey was open from late March to late April 2022.

Tribal CCDF Administrator Survey Findings

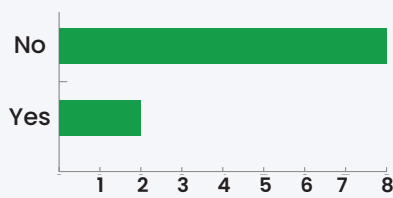
Tribal Representation

Representatives of **10 tribes** participated in the Tribal CCDF Administrator Survey.

LOCATION OF TRIBES REPRESENTED IN SURVEY

Participants included tribal CCDF administrators whose communities share the same geography as the Upper Midwest of the United States.

OF RESPONDENTS INDICATING THEIR TRIBES OPERATE UNDER PUBLIC LAW 102.477



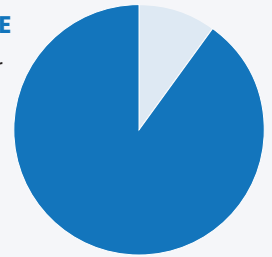
FCF was also interested in whether the tribal CCDF program being administered by the tribe was operating under the auspices of [Public Law 102.477](#), the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992. "The purpose of the Act is to demonstrate how Indian tribal governments can integrate the employment, training and related services they provide in order to improve the effectiveness of those services, reduce joblessness in Indian communities and serve tribally determined goals consistent with the policy of self-determination."¹

¹Source: www.doleta.gov/regs/statutes/pl477.cfm

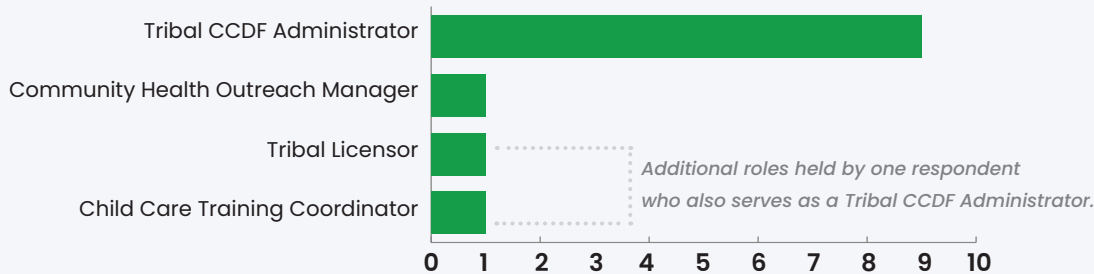
Tribal Role

MOST COMMONLY REPORTED ROLE

90% of Respondents Serve as a Tribal CCDF Administrator

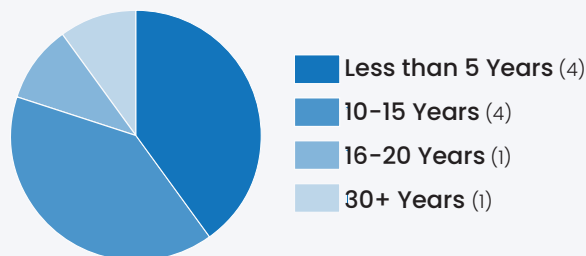


TRIBAL ROLE BY # OF RESPONDENTS



Length of Time in Role

DISTRIBUTION OF TIME IN ROLE



OF RESPONDENTS BY # OF YEARS IN ROLE



Tribal CCDF Administrator Survey Findings

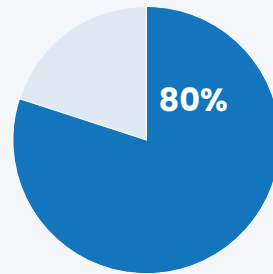
Tribal CCDF Program Administration Responsibilities

Tribal CCDF administrators were asked to identify their tribal CCDF administration responsibilities.

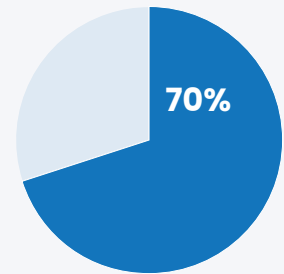
MOST COMMONLY REPORTED RESPONSIBILITIES

90% of respondents were responsible for:

- Writing the Tribal CCDF Plan
- Writing Tribal CCDF Policies
- Allocating CCDF Discretionary Funds

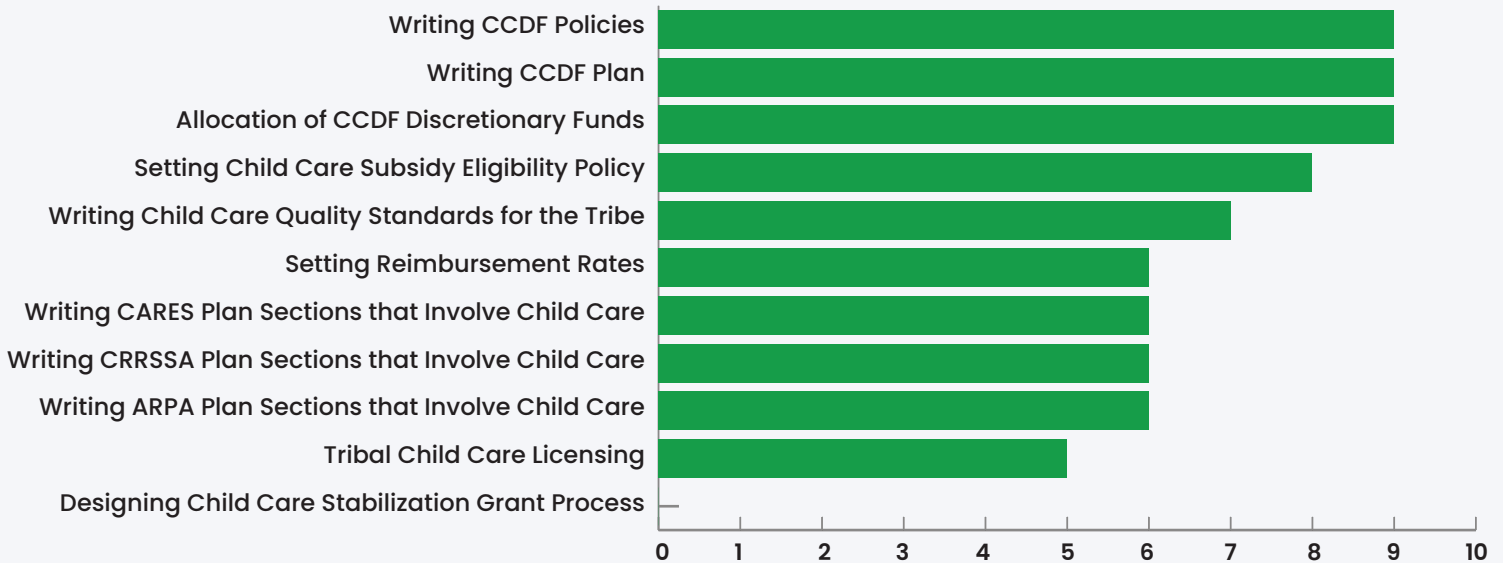


80% were responsible for setting tribal child care subsidy eligibility policy



70% were responsible for writing child care quality standards for the tribe

BREAKDOWN OF REPORTED CCDF ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

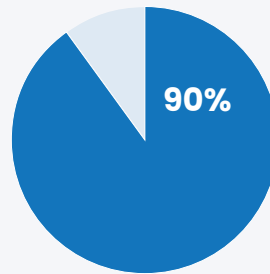
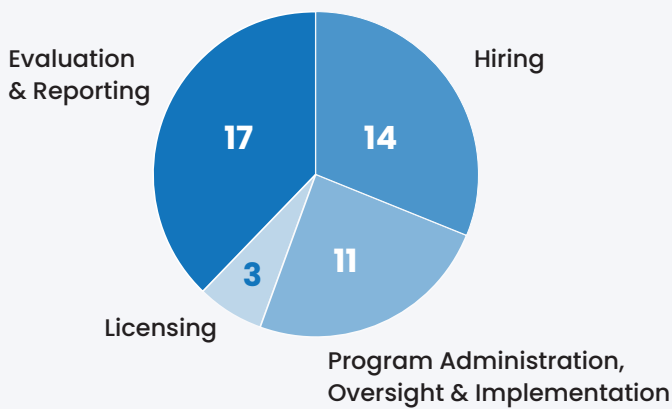


None of the respondents indicated they were responsible for designing their tribe's Child Care Stabilization Grant process.

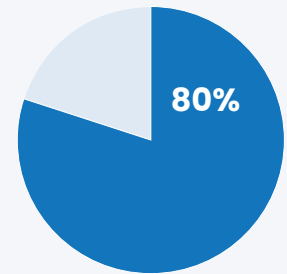
Additional Responsibilities by Tribal CCDF Administrators

Tribal CCDF administrators were also asked to identify their additional tribal responsibilities.

DISTRIBUTION OF ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES BY TYPE

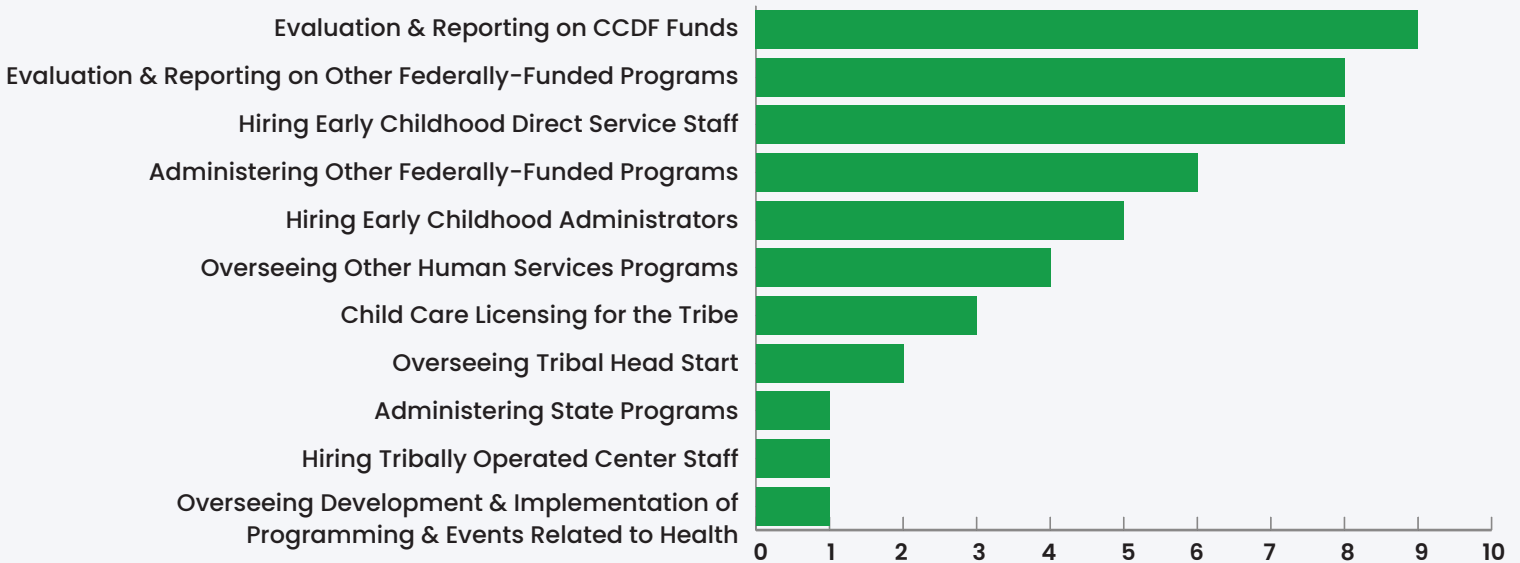


90% were responsible for evaluation and reporting on CCDF funds



80% were responsible for hiring early childhood direct service staff and evaluation and reporting on other federally-funded programs

BREAKDOWN OF ADDITIONAL REPORTED RESPONSIBILITIES



Only two of the 10 respondents indicated they were responsible for also overseeing tribal Head Start.

Tribal CCDF Administrator Survey Findings

ARPA Discretionary Funding

Tribal CCDF administrators were asked several questions regarding their use of ARPA discretionary funding.

First, they were asked if there were ARPA funds other than CCDF ARPA funds that their tribe is using to support child care. Seven of the nine respondents indicated that there were no other ARPA funds being used to support child care. Two indicated other non-CCDF ARPA funds were being used.

Tribal CCDF administrators were also asked whether anyone else within their tribe was making decisions about the allocation of ARPA funding for child care. Four of the nine respondents indicated there was no one else in the tribe making decisions about the allocation of ARPA funding for child care, four indicated there were others, and one indicated they didn't know.

Tribal CCDF administrators were asked whether they had used ARPA discretionary funding for specific projects. Due to the impact the pandemic had on a child care infrastructure

that was already in crisis, it is not surprising that survey responses indicated that most tribal CCDF administrators directed their tribes' ARPA funding to emergency management activities, as opposed to activities to support long term planning.

The most common use of the ARPA discretionary funds was for construction of new facilities (four). The next most common uses of discretionary funds included creating new child care slots and creating new jobs in child care.

None of the respondents indicated they had used discretionary funds for expanding tribal licensing, increasing access to child care, employee benefits, conducting a market rate study, conducting a true cost of care study, or providing stipends for child care workforce apprenticeships.

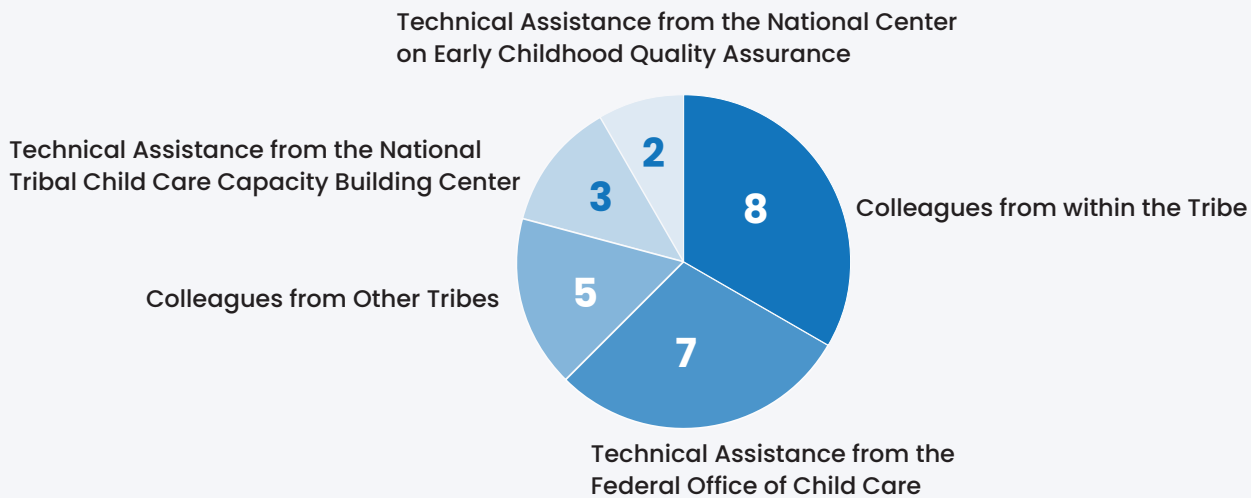
OF RESPONDENTS WHO SPENT ARPA DISCRETIONARY FUNDS ON EACH USE



Support Provided for ARPA Fund Allocation Determination

Tribal CCDF administrators were asked about the support they have to help determine how to allocate ARPA funds. None of the respondents indicated that they contracted with consultants to assist with ARPA fund allocation decisions.

TYPES & SOURCES OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR ARPA FUND ALLOCATION DETERMINATION



Success, Challenges and Questions about Use of ARPA Discretionary Funds

Tribal CCDF administrators were asked questions about the successes they had spending ARPA funds to support child care, challenges they faced in the process, and questions they had about how to use ARPA funds to support child care.

In terms of successes, one respondent noted that as soon as the guidance was issued, her tribe was able to come up with a plan to spend the funds. Others noted they were able to make more families eligible.

Challenges experienced included the complexity of the ARPA guidelines, and related capacity issues, specifically the capacity needed to understand the guidance and implement allocation of the funds. Additionally, it was noted that the grant period needed to be longer because of fiscal management constraints.

Tribal CCDF administrators noted the following questions about the use of ARPA funds to support child care:

- What are the percentages to use after construction?
- Can child care providers apply for ARPA funds from two different agencies that receive the same funding?

ARPA Funding Challenge

“There is a limited amount of time to be able to understand and implement allocation of funds. Many on my team do not have full time capacity to put towards administration of this grant. The funds are appreciated but the amount of time it takes to facilitate allocation is very challenging.”

- Anonymous Survey Respondent

Tribal CCDF Administrator Survey Findings

ARPA Child Care Stabilization

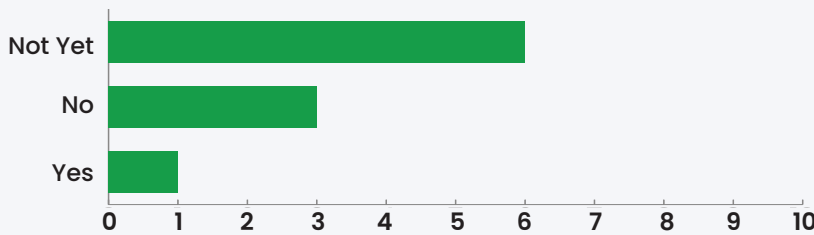
Tribal CCDF administrators were then asked questions about ARPA Child Care Stabilization grants.

Specifically they were asked whether they had distributed child care stabilization grants, who they turn to for support, as well as questions they have about the child care stabilization grants that have not been answered yet.

Of the 10 respondents, only one tribal CCDF administrator indicated they had distributed child care stabilization grants. The one tribe that had distributed child care stabilization grants indicated that “the guidance made it fairly easy to distribute.” No challenges were noted in the distribution process.

Distribution of Child Care Stabilization Grants

OF RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE DISTRIBUTED CHILD CARE STABILIZATION GRANTS



The one tribe that had distributed child care stabilization grants indicated that “the guidance made it fairly easy to distribute.” No challenges were noted in the distribution process.

Support for Child Care Stabilization Grant Process

WHO DO YOU TURN TO FOR SUPPORT?

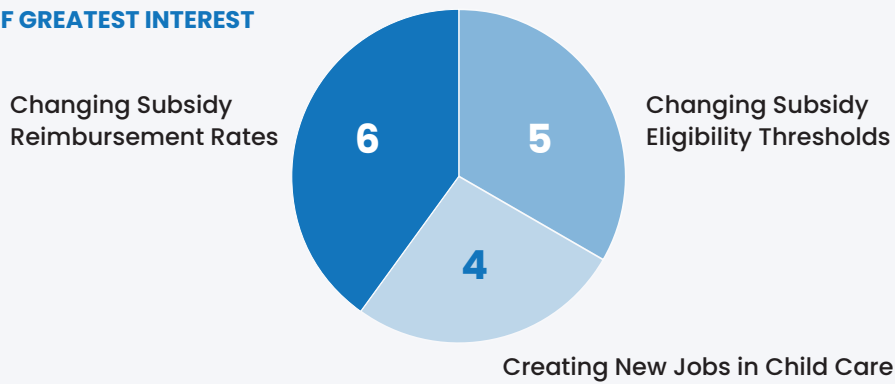
In terms of support for questions about the Child Care Stabilization Grant process, most (four) respondents indicated they contacted their regional office, with the next most common source of support (three) being the National Center on Tribal Early Childhood Development (NCTECD). Respondents also indicated they contacted Minnesota Tribal Resources for Early Child Care (MNTRECC), Northwest Minnesota Foundation, and internal employees such as grant writers, grant compliance officers, or executive directors for support about Child Care Stabilization Grants.

Connecting with other Tribes

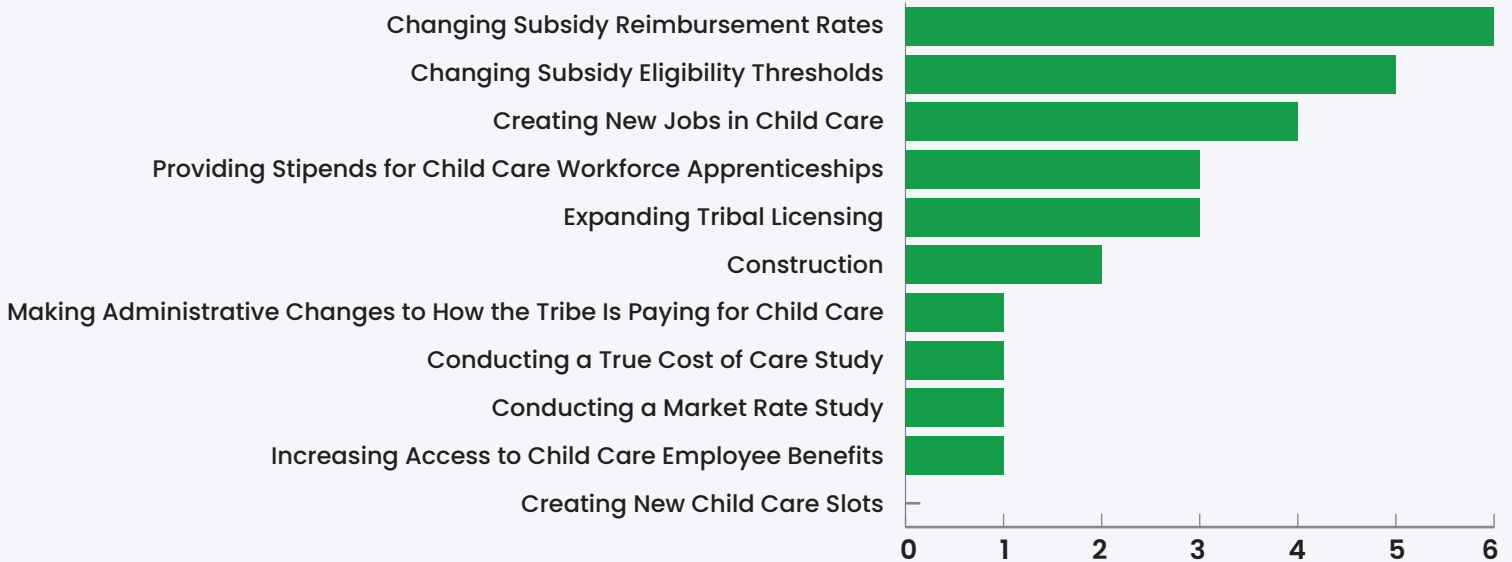
Finally, tribal CCDF administrators were asked which topics they would most be interested in discussing with other tribal CCDF administrators about the ARPA funding.

Identifying Topics of Interest

TOPICS OF GREATEST INTEREST

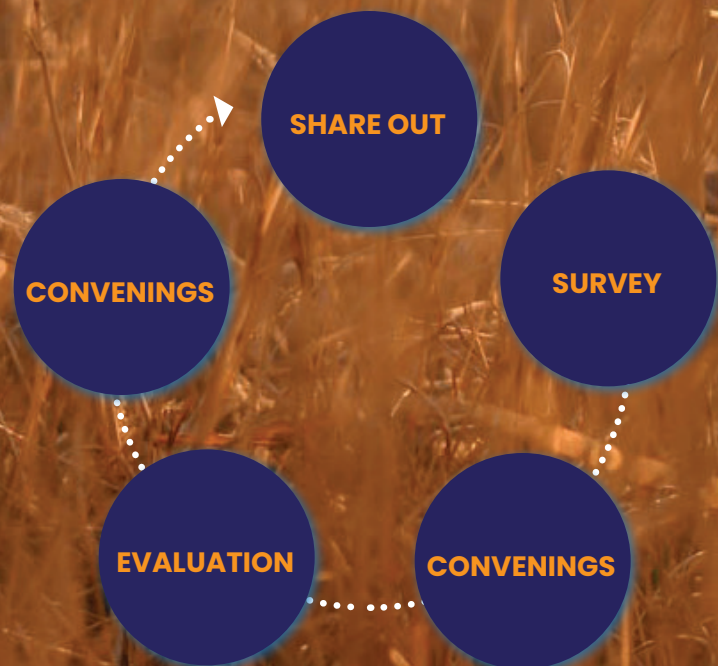


OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED EACH TOPIC



Convening Planning & Outreach

The Innovation in Tribal Child Care Convenings were centered in co-creation with who would be participating in the convenings. Results of the survey of tribal CCDF administrators were used as a basis for planning the convenings with a specific focus on workforce, subsidy, and tribal licensing, as indicated through survey results. In-session polls, chats, and follow-up surveys provided meeting planners with input to plan and structure the successive convenings to be highly responsive to participants' needs. The figure below demonstrates this process.



Series of Tribal CCDF Administrator Convenings

The Innovation in Tribal Child Care series of convenings launched with the first session on July 13, 2022.

Starting with a grounding in First Children's Finance's theory of change and a high-level review of themes emerging from the March 2022 survey of tribal CCDF administrators, the Child Care Business Ecosystem framework was introduced and highlighted as a primary frame in which to anchor the innovation-based discussion.

The Child Care Business Ecosystem framework serves as both an assessment and a planning tool for systems, promoting innovation and flexibility to meet local needs.

It was developed by First Children's Finance through nearly three decades of providing financial and technical assistance to child care businesses of all types and sizes across the country.

Child Care Business Ecosystem



Focus on Financing

Child Care Business Ecosystem: Focus on Subsidy

Presenters **HEIDI HAGEL BRAID**, Chief Program Officer, FCF, & **MOLLY SULLIVAN**, Director of National Initiatives, FCF

The Child Care Business Ecosystem includes subsidy strategies as a key area of focus. Effective subsidy strategy highlights the importance of accurately analyzing the cost of care and designing subsidy programs that (a) address families' needs, (b) are responsive to varying costs, and (c) reduce administrative barriers to participation for child care businesses and families.

Specific strategies to strengthen the use of subsidy to support child care are highlighted in the chart to the right. During times of economic hardship and family and/or provider financial instability, tribes might consider a temporary expansion of subsidy eligibility. Many states, tribes, and territories did this throughout the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The guiding assumption is that expanding subsidy eligibility expands the number of families that are likely to enroll in licensed child care. This increase in demand can help providers maintain the high enrollment ratios needed to stabilize their business and allow them to increase compensation for the early care and education professionals who care for children in their program.

Studying the Cost of Care

Presenters **ANNE MCSWEENEY**, State Systems Coordinator, FCF, & **ELLEN NIKODYM**, Child Care Systems Analyst, FCF

Anne McSweeney and Ellen Nikodym highlighted the importance of studying the cost of care through market rate studies (MRS) and cost of care studies (COC). MRS focus exclusively on the price of child care. COC studies explore the costs of providing care, including expenses such as wages, facilities, food, etc. Cost of care studies were emphasized as the best practice for subsidy rate setting.

Tribal CCDF administrators were encouraged to consider using one-time ARPA funding to conduct a cost of care study. One advantage of using ARPA funds for this purpose is that there are higher costs associated with first time cost model study design, specifically the additional time and resources needed to ground study assumptions in the tribe's context, design collection and analysis methodologies, and for community engagement, which is

Subsidy Strategies

- Child care subsidy payment rates reflect the true cost of care
- Subsidy pays at or above current market rates (at or above 75th percentile)
- The cost of quality is accurately analyzed and defined regularly, including in-person data collections from child care businesses
- States, tribes, or territories set differential rates to incentivize targeted supply building; differential rates are informed by detailed cost of care data
- State, tribe, or territory contracts for slots for infants, toddlers, and children under age 5
- Expanded subsidy eligibility, community eligibility policies, or coordinated enrollment help stabilize enrollment for child care businesses
- Subsidy policies support methods of reliable, predictable reimbursement payments
- Local funding (scholarships, vouchers, etc.) addresses eligibility gaps
- States, tribes, or territories coordinate access to complementary federal funding streams, reduce duplicative administration

a critical, time-consuming and expensive component of cost of care studies. Using one-time funds to off-set these start-up costs is strategic as it reduces cost and burden to tribes in subsequent studies. Cost models can also be used as post-ARPA sustainability planning, helping to mobilize increased financing for child care in some contexts.

Determining the cost of care is a first step. With this step completed, tribes can then use the cost model to justify utilization of ARPA funding to increase rates to meet cost of care and set stabilization grant amounts. Although not tribally-specific, Washington D.C. was highlighted for their strategy to use cost of care data to design a pay equity fund program, highlighting that the use of cost of care study data is not limited to just subsidy rate setting, it can also be used to design other programs.



Innovation in Tribal Child Care with ARPA Funding

Presenter **KIM NALL**, Executive Director of the Tribal Child Care Association of California (TCCAC) and Quality Counts California, Tribal Region QIS Lead

Kim Nall shared a presentation highlighting ARPA funding innovations. Nall shared examples of critical facility improvements that tribes made with ARPA Funds (see table), highlighting those that strengthen health and safety factors.

In addition to innovations tied to critical facility improvement, Nall also shared additional innovations focused on program coordination, including: creating opportunities for tribal early learning and state coordination; coordinating training and workforce pathways for providers and teachers; and coordinating Tribal CCDF Plan writing sessions with Regional Office support.

Other innovations included: creating a cross-sector team and providing funding for a lead planner to do outreach, administrative duties, and to be a point of contact; hiring a consultant to help with a community needs assessment; supporting individuals to attend tribal meetings, state sessions and focus groups to provide strong tribal community voice input on policies impacting early learning; planning virtual or in-person family engagement events throughout the year; hiring a consultant to develop a continuous quality improvement plan for early learning programming and technical assistance; and purchasing a subscription to smart-phone based applications to support family engagement. Finally, she highlighted the use of ARPA funds to invest in outdoor learning opportunities.

Examples of Critical Facility Improvements Made with ARPA Funds

- Installing new HVAC to improve ventilation
- Installing smoke detectors, a sprinkler system, or other fire warning devices
- Installing secure storage for hazardous materials
- Remediating lead paint and/or lead pipes
- Improving food preparation areas
- Installing room dividers
- Improving internal play space
- Installing age-appropriate plumbing, such as child-sized toilets and sinks
- Purchasing materials and play equipment to improve outdoor spaces

In-session poll findings

The Innovation in Tribal Child Care Convenings were not a static one-way delivery of information. They were dynamic and facilitated to promote active engagement of tribal CCDF administrators as co-creators of the process based on their interests and needs. As such, throughout the convening series, in-session polls were used to get real-time input from participants. During the July 13 session, participants responded to a poll that asked, "Please let us know which discussion topics contained new ideas for you today," asking them to choose all that apply from a drop-down menu. The new ideas most commonly selected by tribal CCDF administrators included: (a) the difference between a market rate study and cost of care study, (b) funding early childhood care and education mental health programs, and (c) strategies to change subsidy policies. Those responding to the poll also highlighted the Ecosystem Framework and strategies for negotiating or cooperating with state government.

When asked what would make the next session more enjoyable and meaningful, participants most commonly noted the desire for more specific ARPA examples, more time to chat with other attendees, and more time to talk about challenges and successes.

Session 2: Innovation in Tribal Child Care – July 20, 2022

Focus on Workforce

Anishinaabe Gikindaasowin: Workforce Development as We See it

Presenter **GOVINDA BUDROW**, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FdLTCC), MN

Govinda Budrow coordinates the Child Development program at Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College (FdLTCC). An important focus for her is reclaiming education in a way that creates belonging and understanding for all individuals to arrive as our whole selves. In her remarks, Budrow started by highlighting Native American invisibility in contemporary media, public school curricula, and social science research.

Budrow shared how FdLTCC is working to promote Native American representation in the early education system. FdLTCC is doing this by writing grants and acquiring scholarship opportunities for students to come through college debt free, developing curriculum that centers needed perspectives in creating professionals, advocacy and networking to effect positive change, creating schedules and class opportunities by listening to our students, and promoting belonging and connection. She also shared that FdLTCC has strong transfer options and agreements and stackable credentials. She highlighted the importance of grounding future tribal ECE professionals in Native American developmental teachings and philosophies that empower children.

Innovation in Tribal Child Care Workforce

Presenter **KIM NALL**, Executive Director of the Tribal Child Care Association of California (TCCAC) & Quality Counts California, Tribal Region QIS Lead

Kim Nall shared innovations in tribal communities' workforce. She started by highlighting the ubiquitous early childhood workforce challenge to find qualified and experienced staff and providers, and how this challenge shows up specifically in tribal communities. Nall highlighted specific strategies to utilize ARPA funds for the purpose of recruiting, supporting and retaining early childhood staff. These challenges and strategies are summarized in the table below.

Of the strategies shared, support for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) coaching and consulting was highlighted as a crucial support for early care and education professionals. Support for the mental health needs of children and employees is an allowable and recommended use of both the stabilization and supplemental CCDBG funds. Allowable expenses include workforce development expenses for clinicians, consultants, and/or allied professionals. Additionally, multiple provisions of ARPA include a prioritization of allowable expenditures in mental health and trauma supports. Tribes were encouraged to consider a standalone IECMH project as well as how they might pool resources to streamline

Tribal Workforce Challenges	Specific Use of ARPA Funds to Address Challenges
Difficulty of finding qualified and experienced staff & providers, particularly for infant and toddler settings and in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving child care subsidy payment rates to providers
Low wages earned by early childhood staff coupled with high amounts of stress leading to high turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing staff wages or providing one-time incentives, such as hiring or retention bonuses
High need for training on the impacts of trauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing benefits including paid leave, health insurance, child care, and retirement benefits Providing staff wellness supports such as guaranteed breaks during the work day, access to adult-sized furniture in classrooms, mentoring and coaching, and/or mental health consultation for early care and education staff and providers
Increased behavioral and emotional needs of young children (worsened during pandemic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding scholarships and time off for training or enrollment in educational coursework, apprenticeships, or other practice-based learning that leads towards a credential or degree
Lack of culturally and linguistically trained professional staff to work with Tribal programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding shared services models, substitute pools, and family child care networks



accessibility of supports. To this end, possible uses of ARPA funds to support IECMH include supporting IECMH endorsement and credentialing, including stipends, scholarships and paid internship opportunities. Tribes might also consider how they could provide endorsement or credential-based bonuses for professionals living and working in communities where there are very few consultants.

St. Cloud State University (SCSU) and Lower Sioux Indian Community (LSIC) Teacher Preparation Partnership

Presenters **ALLICIA WAUKAU-BUTLER, OIE Program Coordinator, St. Cloud State University & Lower Sioux Indian Community Teacher Preparation Partnership, & DR. JENNIFER MUELLER, Dean, College of Education & Learning Design, St. Cloud State University & Lower Sioux Indian Community Teacher Preparation Partnership**

Alicia Waukau-Butler and Dr. Jennifer Mueller shared on SCSU's Minnesota Indian Teacher Training Program. The goals of this program are to (a) increase the number of licensed Native early childhood educators in Minnesota; (b) develop Native-centric, culturally sustaining content and practices for educator preparation programs; (c) support workforce development in the early childhood sector through bachelor's degree attainment and teacher licensure; (d) develop leadership skills with Native early childhood educators to contribute to increasing quality of early care and education across Minnesota and in the Tribal Nations; and (e) increase the diversity of the education workforce to directly advance equity and decrease opportunity gaps.

SCSU & LSIC Teacher Preparation Innovations

- Full coverage of tuition and fees for two to three years for those pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Early Care and Education
- Payment for the cost of teacher licensure
- Provide a \$1200 monthly living stipend
- Provide stipends to cover books, fees, technology, and child care
- Induction support (first two years of teaching)
- Hold college courses at the child care center in the community

Child Care Business Ecosystem: Focus on Workforce

Presenter **MOLLY SULLIVAN, Director of National Initiatives, FCF**

Molly Sullivan provided an overview of the Workforce element of the Ecosystem Framework, which states that systems can build the supply of diverse, skilled ECE professionals through recruitment and training initiatives, compensation and benefits programs, and career ladders. Additional workforce strategies include:

- Financial relief programs (tax credits, bonuses)
- Student loan forgiveness
- Career pathway from certification to B.A. degrees supports with articulation agreements
- Communities fund scholarship programs
- Child care businesses are unionized
- Access provided to insurance and retirement benefits
- Apprenticeships in place for child care professionals pay a stipend, link to certification, and are stackable credits
- Wage increases are scheduled through state funding
- Salary scales create parity (compensation and benefits) with K-12 teachers

"If invisibility is part of the problem, representation will need to be in the solution. You cannot meet the needs that you do not see."

- Govinda Budrow

Focus on Creating Child Care Slots

Rosebud Sioux Tribe Child Care Services Program

Presenter GAIL SPOTTED TAIL, Child Care Director, Rosebud Sioux Tribe Child Care Services Program

Gale Spotted Tail presented an overview of the construction of a new culturally-based tribal early care and education facility called “Protector of the Sacred.” At the center, the children will learn traditional Lakota values including bravery, perseverance, generosity, compassion, respect, humility, and wisdom. The early childhood curriculum focuses on the Lakota creation story, history, language, culture, and relationship with the land and all living things, and provide opportunities to practice traditional customs, arts, crafts, ceremonies and games, from which they will learn Lakota ethics and relational values. Not only is the Lakota culture reflected in the values, curriculum, and teachers within the program, Rosebud is also ensuring the facility they are designing reflects the Lakota culture. They are creating outdoor classrooms based on the landforms of the Black Hills and sacred spaces.

Creating Child Care Slots in Indian Country Utilizing Tribal Child Care Licensing and ARPA

Presenter BARB FABRE, CEO, Indigenous Visioning

Barb Fabre’s presentation highlighted how Native nations can develop their own licensing standards to reflect tribal customs and values while ensuring compliance with CCDF. Benefits of tribal child care licensing include:

- Tribes can monitor and ‘control’ what is happening in a child care setting
- Tribes can help create culturally rich child care settings within tribal communities
- Tribally licensed programs can reflect the tribe’s cultural values, language, and practices
- CCDF funding supports tribal licensing to ensure accessibility and affordability of high quality child care for their members within their own community

- Tribally licensed child care providers/centers are small businesses in tribal communities and provide employment opportunities
- Tribes can opt to license non-tribal members within tribal communities to ensure they too reflect the tribe’s values and culture

ARPA funding also provides the opportunity to grow a robust tribal child care system through the path of licensing by recruiting members, supporting their professional development and their tribal child care business.

Innovations in Tribal Communities Tribal Licensing

Presenter KIM NALL, Executive Director of the Tribal Child Care Association of California (TCCAC) and Quality Counts California

When developing tribal licensing standards, tribes have the option of using tribal, state, or local child care licensing requirements. [Federal Minimum Standards](#) for Tribal Family Child Care Homes and Minimum Standards for Tribal Child Care Centers are available to tribes as guidance. When using ARPA funds to support tribal licensing, the following strategies were highlighted:

- Provide ARPA funds to support tribal licensing for new or existing programs to establish safe and healthy environments.
- Create pathways for tribal licensing requirements that incentivize completion of training.
- Provide sub-grants for supplies to increase health and safety to operate during the pandemic and to increase quality for new or existing programs.
- Incentivize family child care and relative care providers to receive coaching and mentoring programs.
- Establish MOU’s and develop a structure for reciprocal agreements that ensure sovereignty is honored.

“Tribal Licensing is exercising our tribal sovereignty rights to govern our own people.”

– Barb Fabre, Indigenous Visioning



Child Care Business Ecosystem: Focus on Supply Building and Facilities Planning

Presenter **MOLLY SULLIVAN**, Director of National Initiatives, FCF

Molly Sullivan presented the Ecosystem Framework's elements focused on Supply Building and Facilities Planning. A key aspect of child care supply building requires states, tribes, or territories to regularly study child care supply and demand to allow prioritization of support for specific types of care to address identified community needs. In addition to the regular study of child care supply and demand, key supply building best practices include: annual implementation of a child care supply-demand gap analysis on state and local levels to inform the development of policies and practices; use of bonuses, wage or slot incentives to incentivize care for priority areas, types, or ages; use of innovative licensing mechanisms to allow family child care businesses to operate in nontraditional spaces that meet licensing standards; innovative licensing mechanisms to allow family child care businesses to care for an increased number of infants/toddlers; and partnerships with Early Head Start to increase the number of quality slots in community-based programs.

Facilities Planning is another Essential Element of the Child Care Business Ecosystem, which focuses on the required planning, design, financing, and health/safety supports, as well as removal of zoning or licensure barriers to support the development and maintenance of safe, quality child care facilities, including family child care homes. Facilities Planning strategies include: school lease levy is approved by local school boards and provides facilities for community-based child care businesses; low or no interest loans are available to providers for facilities; early childhood bonding program is in place; technical assistance, testing, or grants are offered to help businesses select, develop, or remediate child care facilities where children can be safe and healthy; disaster planning is required of all providers and personalized coaching is provided by non-licensing entities; agency supersedes local zoning or business licensing limitations to facilitate the startup of new family child care homes; agency waives payment of land tax for child care businesses; and agency provides tax credit for business expansion.

Questions from Chat

To continue to provide dynamic opportunities for engagement during the July 27 convening, participants were asked to put their comments and questions in the chat. While much of the chat space was used for relationship building and networking of the tribal CCDF administrators in attendance, the following questions and comments did emerge:

- Are we able to purchase materials for providers to complete minor repairs themselves?
- What about rent-to-own for rental space for child care services?
- Developing grant programs for providers to apply for items can also be a way to support providers in getting what they need.
- What about a space for relative caregivers to come and utilize for a day, with the room filled with educational toys?
- There's so much to be grateful for – this is why our culture is important to see reflected in building a child care facility.

In-session Poll

In addition to the chat and comments, an in-session poll was also conducted, which asked participants to respond to the following four questions:

- “Has your tribe used ARPA funding to build facilities?”
- “Has your tribe used ARPA to expand or enhance existing child care facilities?”
- “Does your tribe license its own child care?”
- “Has your tribe used ARPA funding to support licensing?”

Poll responses appear on the following page.

“So much to be grateful for – this is why our culture is important to see reflected in building a child care facility.”

– July 27 Convening Chat Comment

Focus on Creating Child Care Slots

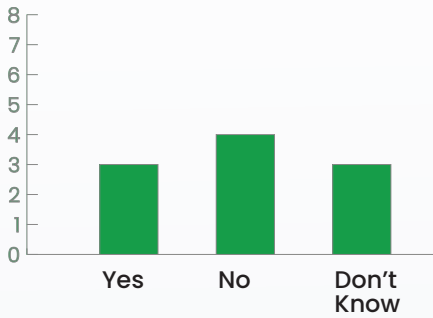
In-session Poll Findings

The in-session poll asked participants to respond to the following four questions:

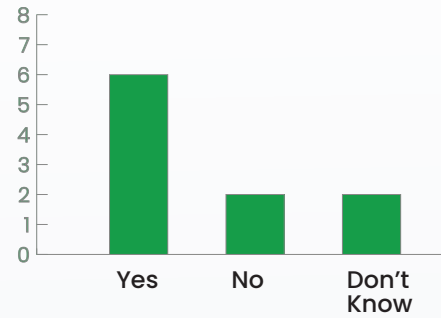
- “Has your tribe used ARPA funding to build facilities?”
- “Has your tribe used ARPA to expand or enhance existing child care facilities?”
- “Does your tribe license its own child care?”
- “Has your tribe used ARPA funding to support licensing?”

Facilities

HAS YOUR TRIBE USED ARPA FUNDING TO BUILD FACILITIES?

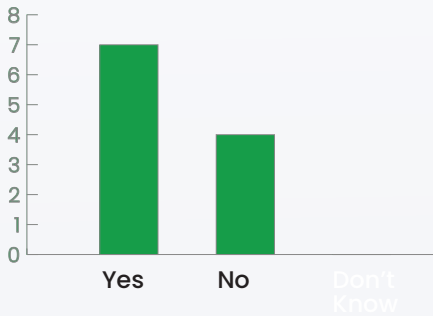


HAS YOUR TRIBE USED ARPA FUNDING TO EXPAND OR ENHANCE EXISTING CHILD CARE FACILITIES?

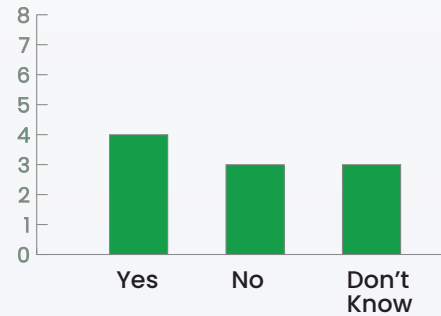


Licensing

DOES YOUR TRIBE LICENSE ITS OWN CHILD CARE?



HAS YOUR TRIBE USED ARPA FUNDING TO SUPPORT LICENSING?

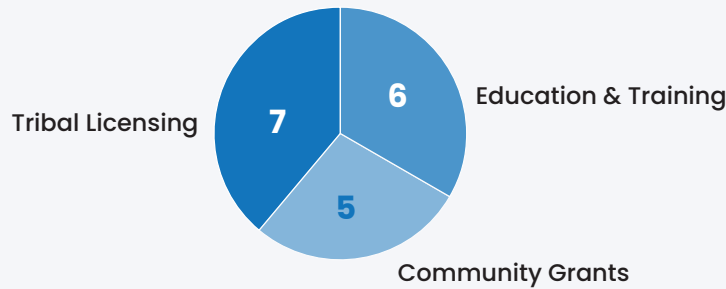


Summer Convening Follow Up

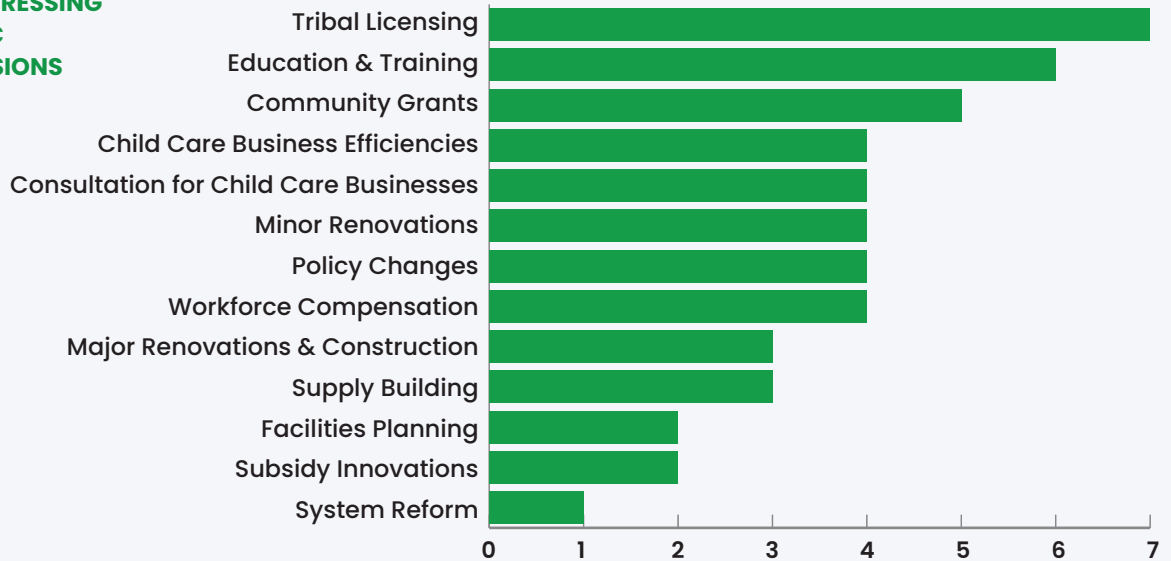
The July series of convenings were rich with content. Tribal CCDF administrators who participated were highly engaged as evidenced by the robust within-session chat and poll responses. Two additional convenings were scheduled for Fall 2022.

To continue to partner with participants to co-create sessions centered on their needs, a brief survey was sent after the July series of convenings to inform and craft the focus of the November sessions.

MOST POPULAR TOPICS



OF RESPONDENTS EXPRESSING INTEREST IN EACH TOPIC TO INFORM FUTURE SESSIONS



No respondents selected Access to Capital, Public-Private Partnerships, or System Financing.

Technical Assistance Conversations

In September and October, FCF reached out to all tribal CCDF administrators whose communities share the same geography as the Upper Midwest of the United States to provide technical assistance on ARPA implementation and other child care supply topics. Multiple resources were shared during and after these conversations.

Tribal CCDF administrators also shared information about the ARPA implementation support with their peers in other communities who contacted FCF for technical assistance. Tribal CCDF administrators expressed great desire to learn more about tribal child care licensing in these conversations and this informed the final convening in the series.

Fall 2022 Convening



Focus on Tribal Licensing

Creating Tribally Licensed Child Care Systems within Indian Country

Presenters **BARB FABRE**, CEO, Indigenous Visioning, & **KIM LAGE**, Early Childhood Specialist/Licensor, White Earth Child Care/Early Childhood Programs

The November 2 convening went deeper into innovations in tribal child care licensing. Speakers highlighted the link between tribally licensed child care and successful tribal economic development. Tribal communities need small businesses like child care centers and family child care homes because of the employment these small business offer and because child care recruits other businesses to the community. Tribal child care allows children to stay in their community and reduces long drives to available child care in neighboring communities.

The importance of advocating to elected tribal leaders was emphasized, specifically that it is important to help tribal leaders understand tribal child care and CCDF. Strategies include inviting tribal leaders to visit child care programs, and meeting with them regularly to keep them updated on tribal child care needs, challenges, and successes.

It's also important to share community assessment results with tribal leadership so they can see what parents (who are their constituents) are saying about the need for child care.

Barb Fabre, Indigenous Visioning, and Kim Lage developed a helpful graphic illustrating the pathway to prepare for a tribal child care licensing system.

This section of the convening concluded with a focus on supporting and connecting tribal child care businesses. FCF was lifted up as a resource to help child care entrepreneurs start and grow sustainable child care businesses by helping child care providers to understand feasibility planning, creating a business model and budget. Other strategies included connecting tribally licensed child care providers with local child care resource and referral systems, child care assistance programs, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and local businesses for support, parent referrals, and to purchase child care slots for their employees.

Child Care Business Ecosystem: Focus on Supply Building

Presenter **MOLLY SULLIVAN**, Director of National Initiatives, FCF

The focus on the supply building Essential Element of the Child Care Business Ecosystem was then reintroduced to participants, highlighting key supply building strategies.

Supply Building



To increase the ability to learn from each other, participants were then divided into small group breakout rooms to discuss three key questions:

1. What supply building strategies are you currently implementing that were missing from that list?
2. What supply building strategies are you funding with ARPA money?
3. What are supply building strategies you are considering for the future?

Supply building strategies that were shared during the breakout sessions included incentivizing home providers with funding and trainings; prioritizing care in specific regions; partnerships with community-based providers to accept subsidy; and building a STEAM center in Pine Ridge.



Learnings to Inform the Future

FCF is honored to have had the opportunity to support tribal CCDF administrators in states that share the same geography as the Upper Midwest of the United States as they implemented ARPA funding to sustain child care in their communities.

The engagement throughout 2022 was implemented to facilitate shared learning for tribal CCDF administrators, FCF, and beyond.

To further shared understanding and inform future tribal CCDF federal funding, FCF presents these learnings for consideration.

Centered in Native Culture

Many of the innovative practices highlighted during the convenings emphasized supports for child care centered in Native culture. Hiring first language speakers, designing and implementing culturally specific curriculum, as well as the culturally specific design of child care facilities all demonstrate how the tribes prioritized making their cultures and communities visible with their ARPA dollars. Tribes are creating a supply of child care that is rooted in and reflects their culture. Future federal funding opportunities should continue to allow for financial support to build a supply of culturally relevant child care.

Successful Tribal Child Care Is Tribal Economic Development

There is a strong link between robust tribally licensed child care and successful tribal economic development. Tribal communities need small businesses like child care centers and family child care homes because of the employment opportunities these small businesses offer and because an adequate, sustainable supply of quality child care allows parents and caregivers of young children to fully participate in the workforce.

Great Interest in Tribal Licensing

Tribal CCDF administrators are interested in expanding tribal licensing. Tribal CCDF administrators who are new to their roles are eager to learn about this opportunity to build culturally reflective and culturally responsive child care in their communities. Future federal funding opportunities could highlight tribal licensing as a tribal child care supply building strategy and allow for the expansion of child care supply through the recruitment and support of new child care providers and an increased child care workforce.

Multi-faceted Role of Tribal CCDF Administrators

As evidenced by the survey from March 2022, tribal CCDF administrators have many roles, often beyond that of implementing CCDF funding. When federal funding opportunities are designed, the guidance and rules need to acknowledge this reality. Specifically, funding implementation guidance would be most helpful to tribal CCDF administrators when it is released simultaneously with the funding.

Longer Spending Timelines

Because of the hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, some tribes had reduced capacity to create and implement an effective plan to spend their ARPA funds in the short timelines established by funding guidelines. This was particularly problematic, as many tribes spent ARPA funds on construction of new facilities (allowable expense for tribes), which involves many time-consuming processes and activities.² When establishing funding timelines, construction timelines need to be taken into account, particularly the review time that is needed for planning and approval from a tribal government in addition to what is required by federal rules.

In addition, most tribal CCDF administrators reported that they directed their tribes' ARPA funding to emergency management activities, as opposed to activities to support long term planning. It is important to question whether tribes may have been able to invest in longer term child care strategies if spending timelines had been extended.

²Source: [Guidance Information Memoranda](#)

Workforce

It is possible to grow a robust tribal child care system by recruiting members, supporting their professional development and their tribal child care business. ARPA funds were a strategic source of support for the early care and education workforce in tribal communities through increased payments, compensation, and benefits. Financial support is crucial to successfully build and maintain a local, culturally reflective early care and education workforce in each tribal community. In addition to increased payments and compensation, future funding opportunities should allow for tribes to hire local Indigenous language speakers to teach languages to children, teachers, and administrative staff.

Cost of Care

Conducting a cost of care study is a crucial first step for tribal CCDF administrators to strengthen their communities' tribal child care funding. Once completed, tribes can use the cost model to justify increased subsidy reimbursement rates and set stabilization grant amounts.

Expand Subsidy Eligibility

During times of economic hardship and financial instability, tribes might consider a temporary expansion of subsidy eligibility. Expanding subsidy eligibility increases the number of families that are likely to enroll in licensed child care. Future federal funding opportunities should allow for tribes to implement subsidy funds flexibly, such as issuing subsidy payments to child care providers based on enrollment, not attendance.



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