



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
330 C Street, S.W., Washington DC 20201 | www.acf.hhs.gov

September 30, 2025

Michell Hicks, Principal Chief
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
P.O. Box 455
Cherokee, NC 28719

Dear Principal Chief Michell Hicks:

Thank you for developing and submitting your Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026-2028 Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan. The Office of Child Care (OCC) has completed its review of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians CCDF Plan for the period of October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2028, and has determined the **CCDF Plan is approved**. Review of the CCDF Plan is a primary mechanism for OCC to evaluate Tribal Lead Agency compliance with the requirements of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 and the CCDF regulation at 45 CFR Part 98, which is subject to compliance actions as described in 45 CFR Part 98 Subpart J, as applicable to Tribal Lead Agencies. Tribes are also subject to separate audit requirements at 45 CFR §98.65.

As you continue to successfully implement your CCDF programs, OCC and the Child Care Technical Assistance Network are committed to working together with you to provide any support and technical assistance you may be interested in. Regional Office staff and technical assistance specialists can also support your Tribe in considering ways to use CCDF funds to support your CCDF Program and remain in compliance.

During the effective period of this CCDF Plan, any substantial changes to your CCDF program must be submitted as a Plan amendment within 60 days of the effective date of the change to the OCC Regional Office for approval in accordance with 45 CFR §98.18(b). Please see the Tribal CCDF Plan Program Instruction for more information about Plan Amendments:

<https://acf.gov/occ/policy-guidance/submit-tribal-ccdf-plan-2026-2028-acf-occ-ccdf-pi-2025-03>.

OCC recognizes that your Tribal Lead Agency may use CCDF funds for services provided by state regulated providers or is using a state system as a part of your Tribal CCDF program. For awareness, we want to share that some state practices, policies, or systems may have been determined to be non-compliant as part of our oversight of state implementation activities. OCC recognizes state CCDF requirements are under the full authority of the state CCDF Lead Agency to implement and therefore, we are not making a compliance determination for your Tribal CCDF Lead Agency based upon non-compliant state policies and practices this Plan cycle.

You will receive a Notice of Grant Award separately from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Grants Management, which will include the amount of your award and

any additional terms and conditions for the receipt of CCDF program funds. We look forward to working together to promote the early learning and development of Native children and family economic stability and well-being. If you have any questions, please contact Eric Blanchette, Regional Program Manager, Office of Child Care at (404) 562-2782 or eric.blanchette@acf.hhs.gov. Thank you for all you do each day for children and families.

Sincerely,

Digitally signed by ANNE-MARIE TWOHIE

Date: 9/30/2025 9:49 AM

EDT

Anne-Marie D. Twohie
Acting Director
Office of Child Care

cc: Olivia Saunooke, EBCI Grants Manager, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Leslie McEntire, Department Manager, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Eric Blanchette, Regional Program Manager, Office of Child Care
Noelle Bee, Program Operations Liaison, Office of Child Care