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**Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan
for**

State/Territory [PUERTO RICO](#)

FFY 2022 – 24

This Plan describes the Child Care and Development Fund program to be administered by the state or territory for the period from 10/1/2021 to 9/30/2024, as provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations. The Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including amending the options selected or described.

For purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions of applicable laws printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text. The Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to the applicable laws regardless of these modifications.

Table of Contents

Introduction and How to Approach Plan Development	4
1 Define Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems and Funding Sources	6
1.1 CCDF Leadership.....	6
1.2 CCDF Policy Decision Authority	7
1.3 Consultation in the Development of the CCDF Plan	11
1.4 Coordination with Partners to Expand Accessibility and Continuity of Care	14
1.5 Optional Use of Combined Funds, CCDF Matching, and Maintenance-of-Effort Funds	21
1.6 Public-Private Partnerships	23
1.7 Coordination with Child Care Resource and Referral Systems	25
1.8 Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan	27
2 Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education	31
2.1 Outreach to Families with Limited English Proficiency and Persons with Disabilities	31
2.2 Parental Complaint Process	32
2.3 Consumer Education Website	34
2.4 Additional Consumer and Provider Education	43
2.5 Procedures for Providing Information on Developmental Screenings	48
2.6 Consumer Statement for Parents Receiving CCDF Funds	51
3 Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families	51
3.1 Eligible Children and Families	52
3.2 Family Contribution to Payments.....	59
3.3 Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children and Families.....	63
3.4 Continuity for Working Families.....	66
4 Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Children	72
4.1 Maximize Parental Choice and Implement Supply Building Mechanisms	73
4.2 Assess Market Rates and Analyze the Cost of Child Care	81
4.3 Establish Adequate Payment Rates.....	87
4.4 Implement Generally Accepted Payment Practices and Ensure Timeliness of Payments	91
4.5 Establish Affordable Co-Payments	94
5 Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings	96
5.1 Licensing Requirements	97
5.2 Standards for Ratios, Group Size and Qualifications for CCDF Providers	101
5.3 Health and Safety Standards and Training for CCDF Providers.....	104
5.4 Monitoring and Enforcement Policies and Practices for CCDF Providers	123
5.5 Comprehensive Background Checks	129
5.6 Exemptions for Relative Providers	142
6 Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce	144
6.1 Professional Development Framework.....	144
6.2 Training and Professional Development Requirements	146
6.3 Supporting Training and Professional Development of the Child Care Workforce with CCDF	

Quality Funds.....	151
6.4 Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines	156
7 Support Continuous Quality Improvement.....	158
7.1 Quality Activities Needs Assessment for Child Care Services	160
7.2 Use of Quality Funds	160
7.3 Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) or Another System of Quality Improvement 162	
7.4 Improving the Supply and Quality of Child Care Programs and Services for Infants and Toddlers.....	166
7.5 Child Care Resource and Referral.....	171
7.6 Facilitating Compliance with State Standards.....	172
7.7 Evaluating and Assessing the Quality and Effectiveness of Child Care Programs and Services 173	
7.8 Accreditation Support	173
7.9 Program Standards.....	174
7.10 Other Quality Improvement Activities	175
8 Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability	175
8.1 Internal Controls and Accountability Measures to Help Ensure Program Integrity.....	176

Introduction and How to Approach Plan Development

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program provides resources to state, territory, and tribal grantees that enable low-income parents to work or pursue education and training so that they can better support their families while at the same time promoting the learning and development of their children. The CCDF program also provides funding to enhance the quality of child care for all children.

The CCDF Plan is how states and territories apply for CCDF funding (658E (a)) and is the primary mechanism that the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) uses to determine state and territory compliance with the requirements of the law and rule (98.16). ACF acknowledges that in the FY 2022 – 2024 Plan, states and territories may still be operating under approved waivers related to the COVID-19 pandemic and where appropriate plan responses should reflect the approved waivers. The CCDF Plan allows states and territories to describe their implementation of the CCDF program and it is organized into the following sections:

1. Define CCDF Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems and Funding Sources
2. Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education
3. Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families
4. Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Children
5. Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings
6. Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce
7. Support Continuous Quality Improvement
8. Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

These organizational categories reflect key goals of an integrated system of child care for low-income working families. Although the Plan is divided into sections for reporting and accountability purposes, ACF encourages Lead Agencies to approach the Plan in a cross-cutting, integrated manner. The intention is that grantees and the federal government will be able to use this information to track and assess progress, determine the need for technical assistance (TA), and determine compliance with specific requirements.

Citations

ACF recognizes that Lead Agencies use different mechanisms to establish policies, such as state statute, regulations, administrative rules, or policy manuals or policy issuances. When asked to provide a citation in the CCDF Plan, Lead Agencies should list the citation(s) for the policy that clearly identifies and establishes the requirement and that allows the Lead Agency to enforce the requirement. Lead Agencies may list multiple sources as needed to cover all types of providers receiving CCDF (e.g., policies for licensed providers may be established in licensing regulations, and policies for license-exempt providers may be in subsidy rules). These citations are intended to provide documentation to support the requested information but not replace requested responses or descriptions. Complete answers must include citations, responses, and descriptions.

CCDF Plan Submission

States and territories will submit their Plans electronically through the ACF-118 electronic submission site. The ACF-118 site will include all language and questions included in the final CCDF Plan Preprint template approved by the Office of Management and Budget. Please note that the format of the questions on the ACF-118 site could be modified from the Word version of the document to ensure compliance with Section 508 policies regarding accessibility to electronic and information technology for individuals with disabilities.

(See <http://www.section508.gov/> for more information.)

In responding to questions, states and territories are asked to provide brief, specific summaries and/or bullet points only with specific language that responds to the question. Do not use tables or copy and paste charts, add attachments, or paste manuals into the Plan. All information and materials developed to support CCDF implementation and information reported in the CCDF Plan are subject to review by ACF as part of ongoing oversight and monitoring efforts.

1 Define Leadership and Coordination with Relevant Systems and Funding Sources

This section identifies the leadership for the CCDF program in each Lead Agency and the entities and individuals who will participate in the implementation of the program. It also identifies the stakeholders that were consulted to develop the Plan and who the Lead Agency collaborates with to implement services. Respondents are asked to identify how match and maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds are used. Lead Agencies explain their coordination with child care resource and referral (CCR&R) systems and describe their efforts on their disaster preparedness and response plans to support continuity of operations in response to emergencies.

1.1 CCDF Leadership

The Governor of a state or territory must designate an agency (which may be an appropriate collaborative agency) or establish a joint interagency office to represent the state or territory as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto (658D; 658E(c)(1) and 98.16 (a)). Note: An amendment to the CCDF State Plan is required if the Lead Agency changes or if the Lead Agency official changes.

1.1.1 Which Lead Agency is designated to administer the CCDF program?

Identify the Lead Agency or joint interagency office designated by the state or territory. ACF will send official grant correspondence, such as grant awards, grant adjustments, Plan approvals, and disallowance notifications, to the designated contact identified here (658D(a) and 98.16(a)).

a. Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Office Information:

Name of Lead Agency: [Administration for the Integral Child Care and Development](#)

Street Address: [Avenida de la Constitución, Pda. #2](#)

City: [San Juan](#)

State: [Puerto Rico](#)

ZIP Code: [00902-5091](#)

Web Address for Lead Agency: [www.acuden.pr.gov](#)

b. Lead Agency or Joint Interagency Official Contact Information:

Lead Agency Official First Name: [Roberto](#)

Lead Agency Official Last Name: [Pagan](#)

Title: [Administrator](#)

Phone Number: [787-724-7474 ext. 3600, 3612](#)

Email Address: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

1.1.2 Who is the CCDF Administrator?

Identify the CCDF Administrator designated by the Lead Agency, the day-to-day contact, or the person with responsibility for administering the state's or territory's CCDF program. ACF will send programmatic communications, such as program announcements, program instructions, and data collection instructions, to the designated contact identified here. If there is more than one designated contact with equal or shared responsibility for administering the CCDF program, please identify the Co-Administrator or the person with administrative responsibilities and include his or her contact information.

a. CCDF Administrator Contact Information:

CCDF Administrator First Name: [Roberto](#)

CCDF Administrator Last Name: [Pagan](#)

Title of the CCDF Administrator: [Administrator](#)

Phone Number: [787-724-7474 ext. 3600](#)

Email Address: Roberto.pagan@familia.pr.gov

b. CCDF Co-Administrator Contact Information (if applicable):

CCDF Co-Administrator First Name: [Sidnia](#)

CCDF Co-Administrator Last Name: [Velez](#)

Title of the CCDF Co-Administrator: [CCDF Director](#)

Phone Number: [787-724-7474 ext. 3737](#)

Email Address: Sidnia.velez@familia.pr.gov

Description of the Role of the Co-Administrator: [The Co - Administrator has the responsibility to plan, coordinate, organize, direct, supervise and evaluate the administration program and the activities concerning the office operational matters. The Co-administrator is also actively involved in the conceptualization and implementation of public policy, corresponding to its area of competence. As such, collaborates and advises the Administrator, Deputy Administrator, and other officials of the Lead Agency on matters related to the office in charge of the Child Care and Development program.](#)

1.2 CCDF Policy Decision Authority

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 public or private local agencies as long as the Lead Agency retains overall responsibility for the administration of the program (658D(b) and 98.16 (d)(1)). Administrative and implementation responsibilities undertaken by agencies other than the Lead Agency must be governed by written agreements that specify the mutual roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency and other agencies in meeting the program requirements.

1.2.1 Which of the following CCDF program rules and policies are administered (i.e., set or established) at the state or territory level or local level? Identify whether CCDF program rules and policies are established by the state or territory (even if operated locally) or whether the CCDF policies or rules are established by local entities, such as counties or workforce boards (98.16(d)(1)). Check one.

- ☒ a. All program rules and policies are set or established at the state or territory level.

If checked, skip to question 1.2.2.

- ☐ b. Some or all program rules and policies are set or established by local entities or agencies. If checked, indicate which entities establish the following policies. Check all that apply.
 - i. Eligibility rules and policies (e.g., income limits) are set by the:
 - ☐ State or territory. Identify the entity. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ☐ Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the eligibility policies the local entity(ies) can set. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ☐ Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ii. Sliding-fee scale is set by the:
 - ☐ A. State or territory. Identify the entity. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ☐ B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the sliding fee scale policies the local entity(ies) can set. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ☐ C. Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - iii. Payment rates and payment policies are set by the:
 - ☐ A. State or territory. Identify the entity. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ☐ B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the payment rates and payment policies the local entity(ies) can set. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ☐ C. Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - iv. Licensing standards and processes are set by the:
 - ☐ A. State or territory. Identify the entity. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ☐ B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of licensing standards and processes the local entity(ies) can set. ***Click or tap here to enter text.***
 - ☐ C. Other. Describe. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - v. Standards and monitoring processes for license-exempt providers are set by the:
 - ☐ A. State or territory. Identify the entity. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ☐ B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of standards and monitoring processes for license-exempt providers the local entity(ies) can set. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - ☐ C. Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - vi. Quality improvement activities, including QRIS are set by the:

- ☐ A. State or territory. Identify the entity. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- ☐ B. Local entity (e.g., counties, workforce boards, early learning coalitions). If checked, identify the entity and describe the type of quality improvement activities the local entity(ies) can set. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- ☐ C. Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

vii. Other. List and describe any other program rules and policies that are set at a level other than the state or territory level: **Click or tap here to enter text.**

1.2.2 The Lead Agency has broad authority to operate (i.e., implement activities) through other agencies, as long as it retains overall responsibility. Complete the table below to identify which entity(ies) implements or performs CCDF services.

a. Check the box(es) to indicate which entity(ies) implement or perform CCDF services.

CCDF Activity	CCDF Lead agency	TANF agency	Local government agencies	CCR&R	Community-based organizations
Who conducts eligibility determinations?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who assists parents in locating child care (consumer education)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Who issues payments?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who monitors licensed providers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who monitors license-exempt providers?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Who operates the quality improvement activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Other. List and describe any other state or territory agencies or partners that implement or perform CCDF services and identify their responsibilities. *Click or tap here to enter text.*

1.2.3 Describe the processes the Lead Agency uses to oversee and monitor CCDF administration and implementation responsibilities performed by other agencies as reported above in 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 (98.16(b)). In the description include:

- Written agreements. Note: The contents of the written agreement may vary based on the role the agency is asked to assume or type of project but must include at a minimum the elements below (98.11(a)(3)).
 - Tasks to be performed
 - Schedule for completing tasks
 - Budget which itemizes categorical expenditures in accordance with CCDF

- requirements
 - Monitoring and auditing procedures
 - Indicators or measures to assess performance of those agencies
- Any other processes to oversee and monitor other agencies.

The Lead Agency does not delegate the determination of eligibility to any other agency or entity. The determination of eligibility is the sole responsibility of the Lead Agency being performed by ACUDEN's regional level staff. The final determination is verified and granted by the eligibility technician and approved by the Assistant Coordinator of the regional office. Once (1) a year the Centers received a follow up visit. This follow-up visit will not be announced. At the time of the visit, the Health and Safety Monitor will apply the Child Care Program's Licensed Center/Home Assessment Plan (CCSS-18-16). Continuity of Eligible Provider Certification (CCSS-14-16) will be conditional on the same conditions prevailing on this visit as on the initial visit. If the service provider deny access to the Monitor at the time of the follow-up visit the eligible supplier certification (CCSS-14-16) will be revoke, which will lead to the immediate suspension of the allocation of funds and disable the center to continue serving children subsidized by the Program. If it is a service provider through the modality of voucher systems, the parent or guardian will be notified immediately of the need to change to a new service provider. Meanwhile the ACUDEN Finance Division, will receive and verify the following reports to ensure compliance with the contract of (allocation) of funds and with federal and State regulations: Overview of expenditure by categories-this report prevents that a service provider make disbursements for a category or non-authorized costs. - List of obligations - this details all the accounts to pay for the project. Bank statements, bank reconciliations and canceled checks - these documents can identify if an expense is allowed and if authorized in the list of obligations. Also, can identify if the payment to the supplier was within the terms required in federal regulation and check balances of cash at "cash on hand".

1.2.4 Upon request, and to the extent practicable and appropriate, Lead Agencies must ensure any code or software for child care information systems or information technology for which a Lead Agency or other agency expends CCDF funds to develop must be made available to other public agencies. This includes public agencies in other states, for their use in administering child care or related programs (98.15(a)(11)). Assure by describing how the Lead Agency makes child care information systems (e.g., subsidy, registry, and QRIS systems) available to public agencies in other states. [The Agency has established a procedure to manage the information of participating families and providers \(subsidy and QRIS\). The information is collected in an electronic system that has the necessary security guarantees to preserve confidentiality. The information is available to other government agencies when requested in writing with due justification. The request must be addressed to the Administrator of the Lead Agency who evaluates and approves it, as necessary.](#)

1.2.5 Lead Agencies must have in effect policies to govern the use and disclosure of confidential and personally identifiable information about children and families receiving CCDF assistance and child care providers receiving CCDF funds (98.15(b)(13)). Certify by describing the Lead Agency's policies related to the use and disclosure of confidential and personally identifiable information. [Article 1.7 of the Child Care Program Regulation, Regulation # 8687 \(page 3\) states that all records related to employees, candidates for employment, applicants and participants of the Child Care Program will be confidential and their information will not be shared unless there is written authorization of the person with an expectation of confidentiality, court order or subpoena. This provision will be applicable to the ACUDEN Lead Agency in its internal functioning. In addition, there is a document \(CCEG-10-18\), which establishes that every participant must authorize the agency to share their confidential information with others. If the participant chooses to do so the ACUDEN is obligated to protect this right. Therefore, in the same document, the participant certifies that the information that he or she gives to the ACUDEN is true and accurate](#)

1.3 Consultation in the Development of the CCDF Plan

The Lead Agency is responsible for developing the CCDF Plan, which serves as the application for a 3-year implementation period. As part of the Plan development process, Lead Agencies must consult with the following:

- (1) Appropriate representatives of units of general purpose local government— (658D(b)(2); 98.10(c); 98.12(b); 98.14(b)). General purpose local governments are defined by the U.S. Census at https://www.census.gov/newsroom/cspan/govts/20120301_cspan_govts_def_3.pdf.
- (2) The State Advisory Council (SAC) on Early Childhood Education and Care (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act) (658E(c)(2)(R); 98.15(b)(1)) or similar coordinating body pursuant to 98.14(a)(1)(vii).
- (3) Indian tribe(s) or tribal organization(s) within the state. This consultation should be done in a timely manner and at the option of the Indian tribe(s) or tribal organization(s) (658D(b)(1)(E)).

Consultation involves meeting with or otherwise obtaining input from an appropriate agency in the development of the state or territory CCDF Plan. Describe the partners engaged to provide services under the CCDF program as described in question 1.4.1.

- 1.3.1 Describe the Lead Agency's consultation efforts in the development of the CCDF Plan. Note: Lead Agencies must describe in a. – c. consultation efforts with required partners listed in Rule and Statute. ACF recognizes that there is great value in consulting with other entities and has provided element d. for Lead Agencies to identify consultation efforts with other agencies or organizations.
- a. Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with appropriate representatives of general purpose local governments. The Lead Agency consulted the development of the State Plan with appropriate representatives of the general local government through the public hearings process. The announcement about the availability of the document for comments was posted in one of the major island-wide coverage newspapers and a public hearing was hosted at the Lead Agency headquarters. All current CCDF providers, including the 42 municipalities were sent a special invitation to the hearings with the link to the draft State Plan published on the ACUDEN website. A copy of the pre-print State Plan was also made available in hard copy in each one of the Department of the Family's five regions and was presented at the public hearing
 - b. Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body. The Puerto Rico Early Childhood State Advisory Council was not activated yet when the state plan was available for comments. Therefore, the Lead Agency consulted the development of the CCDF plan with a similar coordinating body in lieu of the State Advisory Council. It was shared with the Lead Agency Head Start grantee Program Governing Board, who are appointed by the Office of the Governor of Puerto Rico. This board has members with qualifications related to child development and education, which in turn encompasses physical and emotional health. The consulting process was done after a virtual presentation of the CCDF draft plan in their monthly meeting. Board members compared both programs and recommended expanding the partnership between EHS and CC, to address the quality of the services. Additional feedback from the governing body was received.
 - c. Describe, if applicable, how the Lead Agency consulted with Indian tribes(s) or tribal organizations(s) within the state. Note: The CCDF regulations recognize the need for states to conduct formal, structured consultation with Tribal governments, including Tribal leadership. Many states and tribes have consultation policies and procedures in place.
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - d. Describe any other entities, agencies, or organizations consulted on the development of the CCDF Plan. The Lead Agency consulted its CCDF draft plan with the following entities: Department of Health; Department of Education; Institute of Developmental Deficiencies-University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus; the PR Association of Private Child Care and Development Centers (APCCDN); a cooperative of early childhood services (COSIANI); University of Puerto Rico, School of Education, Rio Piedras campus; Head Start Directors Association. Some of the consultation efforts are described below: Meetings with the Department of Education and the Department of Health dealt with the referral protocols for children with special needs. It was agreed that no changes would be done to the protocols. Meetings (virtually & on site) with the Institute of Developmental Deficiencies-Medical Sciences Campus, addressed referrals and follow-up for children with special needs. In the three (3) meetings held with APCCDN members and COSIANI staff CCD staff discussed the modification of the accessibility of services, market rate, CDA and non-covered spaces payment. The Lead Agency leadership met virtually with the University of Puerto Rico - Rio Piedras campus staff regarding the quality of services of the QRIS (Pasitos) program.

- 1.3.2 Describe the statewide or territory-wide public hearing process held to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan (658D(b)(1)(C); 98.16(f)). Reminder: Lead Agencies are required to hold at least one public hearing in the state or territory, with sufficient statewide or territory-wide distribution of notice prior to such a hearing to enable the public to comment on the provision of child care services under the CCDF Plan. At a minimum, this description must include:
- a. Date of the public hearing. [June 25, 2021](#)
Reminder: Must be no earlier than January 1, 2021, which is 9 months prior to the October 1, 2021, effective date of the Plan. If more than one public hearing was held, please enter one date (e.g., the date of the first hearing, the most recent hearing or any hearing date that demonstrates this requirement).
 - b. Date of notice of public hearing (date for the notice of public hearing identified in a. [June 4, 2021](#))
Reminder: Must be at least 20 calendar days prior to the date of the public hearing. If more than one public hearing was held, enter one date of notice (e.g., the date of the first notice, the most recent notice or any date of notice that demonstrates this requirement).
 - c. How was the public notified about the public hearing? Please include specific website links if used to provide notice. [The Public Notice was published in the newspaper with the largest circulation in the country on June 4, 2021. A written copy of the Public Notice was posted on each one of ACUDEN's five \(5\) regional offices bulletin boards and in the central office and a letter was mail it to the CCDF providers. Also the announcement was post it in \[www.acuden.pr.com\]\(#\), and the Department of the Family facebook page.](#)
 - d. Hearing site or method, including how geographic regions of the state or territory were addressed. [The Lead Agency determined to hold a virtual public hearing through the ACUDEN web page to keep the participants' safety as the COVID 19 pandemic still affecting PR. Any person may register through the site and receive access to the meeting. Also to keep opportunities to express the public, the lead agency has an email, \[comentariosplanestatalcc@familia.pr.gov\]\(mailto:comentariosplanestatalcc@familia.pr.gov\), where people can send their recommendations or comments to the ACUDEN Administrator. This email will be available until June 25, 2021.](#)
 - e. How the content of the Plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing. (e.g., the Plan was made available in other languages, in multiple formats, etc.) [The content of the plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing through an announcement in the newspaper with the major distribution island wide and on the agency's website: \[www.acuden.pr.gov\]\(#\).](#)
 - f. How was the information provided by the public taken into consideration regarding the provision of child care services under this Plan? [The Lead Agency recorded all public hearing depositions and discussions by participants in order to capture all information provided by the public. Those participants who had written depositions were invited to provide them as evidence of the information received from the public and invited participants. After the hearings, all gathered comments were discussed and analyzed by the Administrator and key management staff. Relevant recommendations were included in the final After the process ended, all the recommendations were included in the draft.](#)

- 1.3.3 Lead Agencies are required to make the submitted and final Plan, any Plan amendments, and any approved requests for temporary relief (i.e., waivers) publicly available on a website (98.14(d)). Please note that a Lead Agency must submit Plan amendments within 60 days of a substantial change in the Lead Agency's program. (Additional information may be found at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/pi-2009-01>.)
- a. Provide the website link to where the Plan, any Plan amendments, and/or waivers are available. Note: A Plan amendment is required if the website address where the Plan is posted is changed. [The website links to access the State Plan and any Plan amendments is at www.acuden.pr.gov.](#)
 - b. Describe any other strategies that the Lead Agency uses to make the CCDF Plan and Plan amendments available to the public (98.14(d)). Check all that apply and describe the strategies below, including any relevant website links as examples.
 - ☐ Working with advisory committees. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ Working with child care resource and referral agencies. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☒ Providing translation in other languages. Describe: [In the top right side of https://childcare.familia.pr.gov web, there is a language option for the user to select their preferred language](#)
 - ☒ Sharing through social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, email). Describe: [The approved updated version of the State Plan is posted in the Lead Agency web page www.acuden.pr.gov, which can also be accessed through ADSEF, ASUME, ADFAN and the Secretariat web pages, Twitter, and Facebook platforms.](#)
 - ☐ Providing notification to stakeholders (e.g., parent and family groups, provider groups, advocacy groups). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ Working with statewide afterschool networks or similar coordinating entities for out-of-school time.
 - ☒ Other. Describe: [The Lead Agency shares information through virtual and public meetings, website posts and through partner agencies and organizations involved in early childhood education. Publications, public announcements, and email are other means of notifying stakeholders.](#)

1.4 Coordination with Partners to Expand Accessibility and Continuity of Care

Lead Agencies are required to describe how the state or territory will efficiently, and to the extent practicable, coordinate child care services supported by CCDF with programs operating at the federal, state/territory, and local levels for children in the programs listed below. This includes programs for the benefit of Indian children, infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care (98.14(a)(1)).

- 1.4.1 Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates the provision of child care services with the following programs to expand accessibility and continuity of care and to assist children enrolled in early childhood programs in receiving full-day services that meet the needs of working families (658E(c)(2)(O); 98.12(a); 98.14(a)).

This list includes agencies or programs required by law or rule, along with a list of optional partners that Lead Agencies potentially would coordinate with over the next 3 years to expand

accessibility and continuity of care and to assist children enrolled in early childhood programs in receiving full-day services.

Include in the descriptions the goals of this coordination, such as:

- extending the day or year of services for families.
 - smoothing transitions for children between programs or as they age into school.
 - enhancing and aligning the quality of services for infants and toddlers through school-age children.
 - linking comprehensive services to children in child care or school-age settings.
 - developing the supply of quality care for vulnerable populations (as defined by the Lead Agency) in child care and out-of-school time settings.
- a. The Lead Agency is required to coordinate with the following agencies. Provide a description for how coordination occurred.
- i. Appropriate representatives of the general purpose local government, which can include counties, municipalities, or townships/towns. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results: [The Lead Agency has ongoing coordination and communication with the 42 municipalities that receive CCDF subsidies through contracts. Coordination efforts with municipalities serve the goals of increasing the availability and accessibility of high quality child care and development services in local communities with the most need. They are specifically targeted to insuring childcare programs that are healthy, safe and accessible to families. Furthermore, the Lead Agency monitors and coordinates with the municipalities to assist them in implementing the required goals and processes for the provision of high-quality services at their sponsored sites. The coordination with municipalities are led by a Lead Agency contact person who will oversee connecting and coordinating all service provisions and will also coordinate virtual or on-site meetings with municipal representatives. The coordination processes identify strengths and needs for the provision of services, as well as identify potential risks to be reduced](#)
- ii. State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body (pursuant to 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act). Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results: [The Government of Puerto Rico is planning to reorganize and reactivate the SAC. Nevertheless, for the time being coordination continues to be made with the Head Start Program Governing Board administered by the Lead Agency was to discuss review the system related goals and activities included in the State Plan. This board has members with qualifications related to child development, which in turn include early childhood education physical and emotional health](#)
- ☐ Check here if the Lead Agency has official representation and a decision-making role in the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body.
- iii. Indian tribe(s) and/or tribal organization(s), at the option of individual tribes. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results, including which tribe(s) was (were) consulted: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☒ N/A—Check here if there are no Indian tribes and/or tribal organizations in the state.
- iv. State/territory agency(ies) responsible for programs for children with special needs, including early intervention programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part C for infants and toddlers and Part B, Section 619 for preschool). Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results: [The Lead Agency has effective coordination with](#)

agencies responsible for programs for children with special needs, including early intervention programs under the IDEA law. Discussions with the Department of Education (Part B) and the Department of Health Early Intervention Program (Part C) are ongoing to offer quality childcare for vulnerable populations and in out-of-school time settings and to ensure effective transitions and continuity care for children with special needs. MOUs were developed and are implemented to increase access to developmental screenings for infants and toddlers and address the needs of children with disabilities, working with local governments, special projects, and childcare providers. Both agencies work in coordination ensuring adequate referrals for assessments, joint individualized planning, and special education services. The Lead Agency serves children with special needs by providing equal opportunity and access for families. But the specialized services children receive are coordinated to be offered by the Department of Education and, in some cases, parents seek private services for their children. The MOU with the Department of Education address the following specific objectives: 1) Facilitate communication and collaboration between the Lead Agency and its Associate Secretary of Special Education, including .the exchange of information on the services provided by each agency and the appropriate guidance to their officers; 2) Establish referral procedures and documentation for children participating in the Child Care and Development Program between the ages of 3 to 18 years and 11 months, who are suspected of having developmental delays or challenges; 3) Establish referral procedures and documentation for children who receive Department of Education services, but whose IEP prescribes participation in child care and development setting; 4) Establish a feedback process between both agencies to communicate outcomes of referrals; 5) Identify areas of common interest in which joint orientation, training, meetings, and other activities can be developed. Topics of interest may include the child development, management of specific conditions within the served age group, methods of intervention, referral procedures, rights of persons with disabilities, parental rights, laws that protect them, available services, among others; 6) Certify the existence of any developmental condition or disability in a child participating in the DE services and who in turn requests or is receiving services through the CCDF Lead Agency, within the category of special needs.

- v. **State/territory office/director for Head Start state collaboration. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Puerto Rico Head Start Collaboration office located at the Governor's Office (La Fortaleza) maintains direct contact with the Lead Agency and works in conjunction with the Community Alliance initiative. This initiative aims to facilitate collaboration between all Head Start grantees in Puerto Rico with the Child Care and Development Program. Monthly meetings are held in which the needs of families are reviewed and discussed and joint work plans and strategies are established to provide families in Puerto Rico with the best child care and early childhood education services. The team includes early childhood education experts, directors from all Head Start/Early Head Start grantees, directors of Early Head Start and Child Care Partnership programs, Department of the Family representatives and Lead Agency staff.
- vi. **State/territory agency responsible for public health, including the agency responsible for immunizations. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** On going collaboration with the Puerto Rico Department of Health is focused on enforcing the immunization requirement and developing a seamless system to ensure and track developmental screenings and preventive health care for young children. Lead Agency coordination efforts also promote healthy lifestyles, reproductive health and prenatal care for young parents that receive childcare. Child care providers assist families in complying with the immunization requirement by using the Department of Health online system (<https://prir.salud.gov.pr>) for the registration of immunizations. The Lead Agency celebrates Health Fairs twice a year in collaboration with the Department of Health which, in turn, serve as an opportunity for families to take advantage of free vaccination. In addition, if necessary, they are informed of the places where free or lower cost vaccination clinics are being carried out. The collaborative agreement with the Department of Health is intended to facilitate communication and collaboration between the Child Care, Head Start and Early Head Start programs of the Lead Agency (ACUDEN) and the Immunization Division of the Assistant Secretary of Family Health and Integrated Services of that agency, to adequately monitor registration in

the PRIR and thus ensure compliance with State Law 25. Annually, prior to the beginning of the school year, the Puerto Rico Department of Health publishes the Child Vaccination Requirements by Age on its website. Child care centers are informed of these requirements so that their directors provide orientation to parents. Once children are vaccinated and enter the Child Care and Development Program, the Health Unit provides follow-up with center directors to provide the Department of Health, by November 30 of each year, a report on the immunization status of each child enrolled in their childcare centers. When parents do not want to vaccinate their children for medical or religious reasons, they are asked to apply for: 1) a "Medical exemption" - the child's doctor must complete and sign a certification that the child cannot receive the vaccine(s) because its administration could be detrimental to the child's health. The doctor must indicate the vaccines that cannot be given and for how long the child should be exempted from being vaccinated; 2) a "Religious exemption" - the priest or pastor of the congregation to which the family belongs, must get an affidavit from a public notary lawyer that indicates that vaccination is contrary to their religious beliefs. Both the medical certification and religious exemption must be renewed annually. When parents refuse to vaccinate their children and their vaccine exemptions do not comply with the Department of Health requirements, the CC program Health Unit refers them to the Department of Health Director of to contact and orient them about access to vaccination. When there are contagious disease outbreaks, the Health Unit receives direct recommendations and written information from the Department of Health personnel, which is disseminated among all child care and development centers and program networks. In addition, the information is disseminated through the Department of the Family regional offices and the program's Child Care Vouchers Unit. Collaboration with the Department also has the goal of assisting families and children to acquire information and benefits that will help them in the development and preventive health care of their children

- vii. **State/territory agency responsible for employment services/workforce development. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency has adopted a dual-generation approach to services which targets children and parents simultaneously to promote working families' economic self-sufficiency, integral development, and well-being across generations. It encompasses strategic partnerships with relevant agencies and organizations. A close relationship is maintained with the Department of Labor and other workforce development agencies and organizations to disseminate resources and referrals. An example of an activity related to this goal are job fairs celebrated across the island in which program participants participate in the recruitment and selection process of several industries thus helping them with the search of job opportunities. The Lead Agency also has special initiatives that focus on promoting the financial independence of the participating women who are heads of household: "Empoderate Mujer" and "Jefa de Familia"
- viii. **State/territory agency responsible for public education, including Prekindergarten (PreK). Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency has a close working relationship with the agency responsible for public education, including PreK and Kindergarten in order to insure continuity in each child's development and learning. The Lead Agency explores the adoption of the Pathway to Third Grade Success framework with the public education agency and Head Start partners to ensure children's school readiness and subsequent success in third grade. The framework proposes effective strategies at different levels to reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors to reach the following goals: - Healthy, well-timed births -Health and development on track - Supported and supportive families -High-quality childcare and education from infancy to school-age (Ex. aligned early learning guidelines; qualified and competent educare providers) -Continuity and smooth transitions in early childhood experiences - Effective teaching and learning in K-3 classrooms. At present, children in the Department of Education Pre-K program have access to childcare services through vouchers and as a direct contractor slots in a contracted childcare provider. Pre-K children of the Department of Education have access to childcare services in an after school program through a voucher, contract with a CCDF provider or by an allocation of funds
- ix. **State/territory agency responsible for child care licensing. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency keeps direct working coordination with the Licensing Office

of the Department of Family, the unit responsible for issuing the license to operate a child care center in Puerto Rico. The licensing office promotes an effective communication between agencies and providers to ensure attainment of eligibility and State requirements. The Lead Agency works with the licensing office of the Department of the Family to achieve the following goals: 1) Ensure that up-to-date information on childcare supply is available for parents; 2) Support quality child care; 3) Improve the capacity of child care licensors. To achieve these goals, the program: 1) Updates the list of the licensed child care providers; 2) Provides technical assistance to child care providers to comply with state and federal regulations; 3) Provides opportunities and access to continuing education, conferences and/or training sessions in specialized knowledge and competencies

- x. **State/territory agency responsible for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and other relevant nutrition programs. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency keeps an effective working relationship with the Puerto Rico Department of Education, which is the agency responsible for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The childcare centers managed by the Agency serve the meals based on the applicable regulations of the Food Program (PACNA). The goals shared and worked by the Lead Agency based on PACNA requirements are associated with menu planning, meal patterns, food safety, nutrition education among others.
- xi. **McKinney-Vento state coordinators for homeless education and other agencies providing services for children experiencing homelessness and, to the extent practicable, local McKinney-Vento liaisons. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency has established effective coordination with the Department of the Family, which is the governmental agency in charge to provide services to homeless families through referrals. This working relationship has been centered in identifying and supporting families with children that became homeless as a result of the 2017-2021 hurricane, earthquake and COVID-19 pandemic disasters. The Department of the Family has an office to assist homeless families as one of their priorities. A collaborative agreement was made to offer child care services to homeless children through referrals, thereby providing appropriate access to needed services for children and their families that lost their homes. The Lead Agency assembled a workgroup, in collaboration with DF homeless service providers, to develop and implement a plan, outlining procedures and training that address the specific needs for effectively serving homeless children.
- xii. **State/territory agency responsible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency keeps a direct working relationship with the Administration for the Socioeconomic Development of Families under the Puerto Rico Department of Family, to coordinate with the Nutritional Assistance Program (NAP) and the TANF program. The ADSEF will guide and refer the services offered to participants of the temporary assistance program of the family's needs, who are located in employment and receiving the transitional payment for childcare service. The Lead Agency will evaluate the referrals as well as determine the eligibility of families to the services to be provided
- xiii. **Agency responsible for Medicaid and the state Children's Health Insurance Program. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency has established a working relationship with primary health care centers and insurance companies to support access to medical services to participating families, ensuring compliance with program regulations. The Lead Agency also coordinates with staff from the Department of Health since they have a Mobile service unit for families and children with health problems.
- xiv. **State/territory agency responsible for mental health. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency has established a working relationship with the Mental Health Anti Addiction Services Administration (ASSMCA for its Spanish acronym), responsible for the delivery of mental health services. An agreement is in process to refer and coordinate appropriate services for children in need. The Lead Agency will continue working with its partners to promote an increased integration of child mental health services in primary health care and in childcare and development

settings. It will collaborate with ASSMCA and with other relevant projects to establish mental health consultation and infant mental health initiatives among all providers.

- xv. **Child care resource and referral agencies, child care consumer education organizations, and providers of early childhood education training and professional development. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency created the Early Childhood Resource and Referral Centers, known by the acronym CENTRANA, as a venue for provider and consumer education and support. At present, its goal is to operate a service center, that can provide technical assistance, training, guidance, and specialized materials in early education and make them available to professionals, parents and the general community. Services, resources and technical support are provided by trained professionals in the following areas such as, human growth and development, language and communication, socio-emotional development, physical development, self-help, cognitive development, behavioral management, special education, health, nutrition, and safety among many others. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Lead Agency and the Municipality of Vega Baja aims to ensure the gradual development and continuity of a new service delivery concept that will be available to the population that is served by CENTRANA. Under this new service modality, children are impacted at an early age, allowing parents, professionals and the community to strengthen joint efforts to improve the quality of services provided to children in compliance with the quality standards established in 45 C.F.R. S98.51 for the development of activities for the improvement of child care and with the annual work plans designed by the Lead Agency for the provision of child care and development program services. The MOU includes the following joint activities for the development and effective implementation of the program: 1) Design and implementation of the concept throughout the Municipality of Vega Baja with the Lead Agency's technical assistance; 2) Technical assistance from the Lead Agency in the areas of childcare, health, safety, nutrition, first aid, identification of contagious diseases, identification and prevention of child abuse and the management of children with special needs. 3) Orientation and guidance to the general public on the scope of the services provided through the program and the child development alternatives they have; 4) Assistance to parents, guardians, teachers, caregivers and professionals on quality improvement in child care and development; 5) Monitoring program compliance with the federal and state legislation requirements and objectives, as well as with the work plan established by the Lead Agency for the development of the program..
- xvi. **Statewide afterschool network or other coordinating entity for out-of-school time care (if applicable). Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency has established coordination with all its delegated and voucher participant providers (Vale) that provide out-of-school time care. The availability of childcare on Saturdays has been promoted among them based on the identified needs of parents of children currently enrolled in the program.
- xvii. **Agency responsible for emergency management and response. Describe the coordination goals, processes, and results:** The Lead Agency established an emergency operational plan following the 2 hurricanes, 2 earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic events experienced in the islands of Puerto Rico in the last 4 years. This Emergency Operational Plan has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines established by the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and in collaboration with the latter. The primary purpose is to protect life and property from the risks and dangers to which our service providers and/or employees may be exposed. training and workshops were developed for the implementation of this plan that includes strategies for preparation before, during and after an emergency. The Workshops topics apply to hurricanes, earthquakes, pandemic situations like COVID-19, fire, and address crisis management and nutrition for children and their families before, during and after the event. Preparation strategies in workshops include developing and preparing a checklist to be used before the hurricane season, preparing an emergency backpack, and family plan preparation. Providers are offered emergency telephones as part of the training program. The Lead Agency maintains an up-to-date directory of all providers that were assigned funding with their respective addresses, phone numbers, alternative phones, and e-mails. In addition, the directory contains information about whether they have an electric generator, - its capacity

and whether it is fueled by gas or gasoline, - and water tanks and their capacity in gallons. On the other hand, the Lead Agency, in collaboration with the licensing office, will carry out visits to providers after the passage of an natural event or system to confirm if the centers have been affected and to what extent can they offer adequate services to families and children

- b. The following are examples of optional partners a state might coordinate with to provide services. Check which optional partners the Lead Agency coordinates with and describe the coordination goals, processes and results.
- ☒ i. State/territory/local agencies with Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership grants. Describe: The Lead Agency has four Early Head Start-Child Care partnership agreements in place with four Early Head Start grantees, to ensure quality services while childcare regulations and procedures are implemented. The partner EHS programs are: Iglesias Bautista de Quintana Inc., Municipality of San Sebastian, Diocese of Mayaguez and Municipality of Caguas
 - ☒ ii. State/territory institutions for higher education, including community colleges. Describe: The Lead Agency coordinates with different institutions of post-secondary education to offer services in their respective institutions. Specifically, it works with the University of Puerto Rico to create an alternative study program leading to a CDA credential or infant-toddler development and care specialized certifications. In addition, the agency will continue to partner with the University of Puerto Rico (UPRRP), Rio Piedras campus, for the implementation of the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), that measures the quality of services that are provided by child care providers. The process consists of the development of a monitoring plan; entry of the results (criteria scores) to the database by the mentors and make that information public. In addition, THE UPRRP will provide the Lead Agency with the information needed or requested in terms of the number of centers where the QRIS ("PASITOS") was implemented and the results thereof. It sends an annual report of the assessed centers to the Lead Agency.
 - ☒ iii. Other federal, state, local, and/or private agencies providing early childhood and school-age/youth-serving developmental services. Describe: The Lead Agency has adopted a dual generation pproach to services which targets children and parents simultaneously to promote the economic self-sufficiency, integral development, and well-being of working families across generations. To integrate this approach into programming ACUDEN will seek guidance from the most current research, developers, and practitioners. The above mentioned, as established in Regulation 8687
 - ☒ iv. State/territory agency responsible for implementing the Maternal and Child Home Visitation programs grant. Describe: See collaboration with public health system above
 - ☐ v. Agency responsible for Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment Program. Describe: See collaboration with public health system above (1.4.1(a)(vi)).
 - ☒ vi. State/territory agency responsible for child welfare. Describe: The Lead Agency will continue to work closely with the Administration for Families and Children of the Department of the Family to identify and provide childcare service to children from foster parents who are working, in job training or school

- ☒ vii. **Provider groups or associations.** Describe: The Lead Agency maintains open communication and ongoing coordination with the PR Association of Child Care and Development Centers (APCCD) and the Puerto Rico Association for the Education of Young Children (PRAEYC), for policy development and training. It also coordinates services closely with United Way of Puerto Rico (Fondos Unidos), which has a Hotline (211) to provide information and guidance to the general public about the availability of child care centers, programs outside school hours, summer camps, recreational activities, tutoring, child protective services and support to families. Information includes their location, days and hours of operation and other relevant data. The Lead Agency has contributed actively to the following United Way Initiatives: Comité Asesor Ciudad Amiga de la Niñez (Advisory Committee on Child-Friendly Cities); Alianza Por Los Derechos de la Niñez (Alliance on Children's Rights). These initiatives promote projects that benefit children at an early age
- ☒ viii. **Parent groups or organizations.** Describe: The Lead Agency coordinates its services for children with special needs with the following parent organization: Apoyo a Padres de Niños con Impedimentos (APNI)/ Support to Parents of Children with Disabilities
- ☐ ix. **Other.** Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

1.5 Optional Use of Combined Funds, CCDF Matching, and Maintenance-of-Effort Funds

Optional Use of Combined Funds: States and territories have the option to combine CCDF funds with any required program in 1.4.1. These programs include those operating at the federal, state, and local levels for children in preschool programs, tribal early childhood programs, and other early childhood programs, including those serving infants and toddlers with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care (658E(c)(2)(O)(ii)).

Combining funds could include blending multiple funding streams, pooling funds, or layering funds together from multiple funding streams to expand and/or enhance services for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children and families to allow for the delivery of comprehensive quality care that meets the needs of children and families. For example, state/territory agencies may use multiple funding sources to offer grants or contracts to programs to deliver services; a state/territory may allow a county/local government to use coordinated funding streams; or policies may be in place that allow local programs to layer CCDF funds with additional funding sources to pay for full-day, full-year child care that meets Early Head Start/Head Start Program Performance Standards or state/territory Prekindergarten requirements in addition to state/territory child care licensing requirements.

As a reminder, CCDF funds may be used in collaborative efforts with Head Start programs to provide comprehensive child care and development services for children who are eligible for both programs. In fact, the coordination and collaboration between Head Start and CCDF is strongly encouraged by sections 640(g)(1)(D) and (E); 640(h); 641(d)(2)(H)(v); and 642(e)(3) of the Head Start Act in the provision of full working day, full calendar year comprehensive services. To implement such collaborative programs, which share, for example, space, equipment, or materials, grantees may layer several funding streams so that seamless services

are provided (Policy and Program Guidance for the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/acf_im_ohs_15_03.pdf).

1.5.1 Does the Lead Agency choose to combine funding for CCDF services for any programs identified in 1.4.1 (98.14(a)(3))?

- ☒ No (If no, skip to question 1.5.2)
- ☐ Yes. If yes, describe at a minimum:
 - a. How you define “combine” [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - b. Which funds you will combine? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - c. What is your purpose and expected outcomes for combining funds, such as extending the day or year of services available (i.e., full-day, full-year programming for working families), smoothing transitions for children, enhancing and aligning quality of services, linking comprehensive services to children in child care, or developing the supply of child care for vulnerable populations? Note: Responses should align with the goals, processes and results describe in 1.4.1. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - d. How you will be combining multiple sets of funding, such as at the state/territory level, local level, program level? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - e. How are the funds tracked and method of oversight [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

1.5.2 Which of the following funds does the Lead Agency intend to use to meet the CCDF matching and MOE requirements described in 98.55(e) and 98.55(h)? Check all that apply.

Note: Lead Agencies that use Prekindergarten funds to meet matching requirements must check Prekindergarten funds and public and/or private funds. Use of PreK for Maintenance of Effort: The CCDF Final Rule clarifies that public PreK funds may also serve as maintenance-of-effort funds as long as the state/territory can describe how it will coordinate PreK and child care services to expand the availability of child care while using public Prekindergarten funds as no more than 20 percent of the state’s or territory’s maintenance of effort or 30 percent of its matching funds in a single fiscal year (FY) (98.55(h)). If expenditures for PreK services are used to meet the maintenance-of-effort requirement, the state/territory must certify that it has not reduced its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services (98.55(h)(1); 98.15(a)(6)).

Use of Private Funds for Match or Maintenance of Effort: Donated funds do not need to be under the administrative control of the Lead Agency to qualify as an expenditure for federal match. However, Lead Agencies do need to identify and designate in the state/territory Plan the donated funds given to public or private entities to implement the CCDF child care program (98.55(f)).

- ☒ a. N/A—The territory is not required to meet CCDF matching and MOE requirements.
- ☐ b. Public funds are used to meet the CCDF matching fund requirement. Public funds may include any general revenue funds, county or other local public funds, state-/territory-specific funds (tobacco tax, lottery), or any other public funds.
 - i. If checked, identify the source of funds: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ c. Private donated funds are used to meet the CCDF matching funds requirement. Only private funds received by the designated entities or by the Lead Agency may be counted for match purposes (98.53(f)).

- i. If checked, are those funds:
 - ☐ A. Donated directly to the state?
 - ☐ B. Donated to a separate entity(ies) designated to receive private donated funds?
 - ii. If checked, identify the name, address, contact, and type of entities designated to receive private donated funds: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ d. State expenditures for PreK programs are used to meet the CCDF matching funds requirement. If checked, provide the estimated percentage of the matching fund requirement that will be met with Prekindergarten expenditures (not to exceed 30 percent): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - i. If the percentage is more than 10 percent of the matching fund requirement, describe how the state will coordinate its Prekindergarten and child care services: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ii. Describe the Lead Agency efforts to ensure that Prekindergarten programs meet the needs of working parents: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ e. State expenditures for Prekindergarten programs are used to meet the CCDF maintenance-of-effort requirements. If checked,
 - i. Assure by describing how the Lead Agency did not reduce its level of effort in full-day/full-year child care services, pursuant to 98.55(h)(1) and 98.15(a)(6). [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ii. Describe the Lead Agency efforts to ensure that Prekindergarten programs meet the needs of working parents: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - iii. Estimated percentage of the MOE Fund requirement that will be met with Prekindergarten expenditures (not to exceed 20 percent): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - iv. If the percentage is more than 10 percent of the MOE requirement, describe how the state will coordinate its Prekindergarten and child care services to expand the availability of child care: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ f. The same funds are used to meet at least some of the CCDF MOE and TANF MOE requirements.
 - i. If known, what percent of funds used to meet CCDF MOE also is used to meet TANF MOE requirements? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

1.6 Public-Private Partnerships

Lead Agencies are required to describe how they encourage public-private partnerships among other public agencies, tribal organizations, private entities, faith-based organizations, businesses or organizations that promote business involvement, and/or community-based organizations to leverage existing service delivery (i.e., cooperative agreement among providers to pool resources to pay for shared fixed costs and operation) (658E(c)(2)(P)). ACF expects these types of partnerships to leverage public and private resources to further the goals of the CCDBG Act. Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate how they encourage public-private partnerships to

leverage existing child care and early education service-delivery systems and to increase the supply and quality of child care services for children younger than age 13, for example, by implementing voluntary shared service alliance models (98.14(a)(4)).

- 1.6.1 Identify and describe any public-private partnerships encouraged by the Lead Agency to leverage public and private resources to further the goals of the CCDBG Act. Include in the response any public-private partnerships that have emerged from the response to the COVID-19 pandemic (98.16(d)(2)) and if applicable, how those partnerships will be continued post-pandemic. The Lead Agency has engaged directly and encouraged the following public-private partnerships among its providers:
- 1) Resilient Children/ Resilient Communities Program, Columbia University/ National Center of Disaster Preparedness (NCDP). Program Website: <https://ncdp.columbia.edu>. The purpose of the agreement is to authorize the NCDP to work with the Lead Agency regional offices of Humacao and Mayagüez and the Community Resilience Coalitions organized in those regions by the Institute for the Development of Youth to: a) Complete the Community Preparedness Index (IPC) both at the start and end of the project and participate in activities related to that index; b) Work in collaboration with the NCDP and IDJ in the development of new training materials; c) Participate in drills and exercises to improve disaster preparedness for shelters and child care centers; d) Participate in individual and regional coordination meetings;.
 - 2) Department of Family Entity: Save the Children Fund, Inc. Organization website: <https://www.savethechildren.org/>. The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of Puerto Rico, acting through the Department of Family (DoF), and Save the Children Fund, Inc. (STC), is to insure that the needs of the children whose families have been struggling with basic services such as shelter, water, electricity, and food after the natural disasters (2017 hurricanes and 2019 & 2020 earthquakes) and the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic, are being met. Children have been the most affected by these events. The priority of this agreement is to help them recover emotionally from these catastrophes, hence having a positive impact on their lives. This MOU sets forth the general understanding and specific responsibilities of each party relating to key aspects of the governance and operation of supporting systems, focusing on DoF systems and staff capacity building through tailored training on psychosocial support and preparedness. The training provides DoF staff with tools and techniques that can be utilized to support the immediate and longer-term recovery of children and their families. This included Save the Children's signature psychosocial support programs, Journey of Hope and HEART, which use cooperative play, literacy discussion, drama, and art to help children and caregivers explore and normalize their emotions, especially following stressful events. In addition to using arts for healing, HEART also uses arts-based creative learning methods to make education more interactive and fun in math, vocabulary, literacy, history, and other subject areas. Basics of Psychological First Aid (PFA). Child Care Emergency Preparedness Planning with Head Start and Early Head Start staff. The CCEP supports child care facility staff to be better prepared for future emergencies. The Department of Family (DoF) will work in cooperation with STC for STC to provide training to DoF staff on psychosocial support and preparedness programs that will help Puerto Rican families recover from Hurricane Maria and be better prepared for future emergencies. Both parties shall work together to support the capacity building of DoF staff and programs.
 - 3) Cooperativa de Servicios de Evaluación e Investigación - The purpose of the Market Rate Survey is to assess market child care rates among child care centers and homes licensed by the Department of Family. These rates will then serve as a guide to provide subsidized child care to qualifying families according to their annual income and the number of family members. The Market Rate Survey described will collect rates data for different children's age categories: infants (birth thru 18 months) and toddlers (19 months thru 2 years and 11 months), preschoolers (3 years thru 4 years and 11 months), and special needs children (until 18 years and 11 months). It also considers if services are provided on a full time or part-time basis. The rate that lies at the 75th percentile is selected within each category. The objectives that will guide this research are the following -Complete the selection of the sample -Design the survey instrument and the associated database -Provide training to the ACUDEN personnel that will collaborate in the data collecting process -Transfer Market Rate Survey data collected to an SPSS database. -Verify collected data examining the database vis a vis data collection documents and note. -Develop a sliding fee scale considering the family's annual income and the number of family members. -Describe the procedure of developing a sliding fee scale in detail so that the ACUDEN can replicate the process in future Market Rate Surveys. Develop and describe in detail the process of determining a family's child care copayments (reduced payments)

1.7 Coordination with Child Care Resource and Referral Systems

Lead Agencies may use CCDF funds to establish or support a system or network of local or regional child care resource and referral (CCR&R) organizations that is coordinated, to the extent determined by the state/territory, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based or regionally based, lead child care resource and referral organization (such as a statewide CCR&R network) (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii); 98.52).

If Lead Agencies use CCDF funds for local CCR&R organizations, the local or regional CCR&R organizations supported by those funds must, at the direction of the Lead Agency:

- Provide parents in the state with consumer education information concerning the full range of child care options (including faith-based and community-based child care providers), analyzed by provider, including child care provided during non-traditional hours and through emergency child care centers, in their area.

- To the extent practicable, work directly with families who receive assistance to offer the families support and assistance to make an informed decision about which child care providers they will use to ensure that the families are enrolling their children in the most appropriate child care setting that suits their needs and one that is of high quality (as determined by the Lead Agency).
- Collect data and provide information on the coordination of services and supports, including services under Part B, Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- Collect data and provide information on the supply of and demand for child care services in areas of the state and submit the information to the state.
- Work to establish partnerships with public agencies and private entities, including faith-based and community-based child care providers, to increase the supply and quality of child care services in the state and, as appropriate, coordinate their activities with the activities of the state Lead Agency and local agencies that administer funds made available through CCDF (98.52(b)).

Nothing in the statute or rule prohibits states from using CCR&R agencies to conduct or provide additional services beyond those required by statute or rule.

Note: Use 1.7.1 to address if a state/territory funds a CCR&R organization, describe what services are provided and how it is structured. Use subsection 7.5 to address the services provided by the local or regional child care resource and referral agencies and the indicators of progress met by CCR&R organizations if they are funded by quality set-aside funds.

1.7.1 Does the Lead Agency fund local or regional CCR&R organizations?

- ☒ No. The state/territory does not fund a CCR&R organization(s) and has no plans to establish one.
- ☐ Yes. The state/territory funds a CCR&R organization(s) with all the responsibilities outlined above. If yes, describe the following:

How are CCR&R services organized? Include how many agencies, if there is a statewide network, and if the system is coordinated: *At present, there are no statewide CCR&R networks. The agency works in collaboration with the Center of Resources and Referrals for Early Childhood (the acronym for its name in Spanish for (CENTRANA) and United Way of Puerto Rico. These agencies provide support in the dissemination of resources and implementation of the referral process to community agencies and childcare facilities by geographic areas. United Way has a 2-1-1 line which supports a comprehensive resource and referral system for parents to enhance the accessibility of services by location and service modalities. It includes the CCDF program providers in its island wide database. These collaborations support the service and are implemented successfully, given the fact that the ACUDEN does not delegate funding for resource and referrals. On the other hand, the Lead Agency receives referrals for child care services from government agencies such as the Department of Education, ADSEF, ADFAN and the Department of Health*

1.8 Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan

In past disasters, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the provision of emergency child care services and rebuilding and restoring of child care infrastructure has emerged as an essential service. Lead Agencies are required to establish a Statewide Child Care Disaster Plan (658E(c)(2)(U)). They must demonstrate how they will address the needs of children—including

the need for safe child care before, during, and after a state of emergency declared by the Governor, or a major disaster or emergency (as defined by Section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5122)—through a Statewide Disaster Plan. The effective date for the establishment of this Statewide Disaster Plan was October 1, 2018.

- 1.8.1 Did you make any updates to the Statewide Disaster Plan since the FY 2019-2021 CCDF Plan was submitted? Please consider any updates that were made as a result of the Lead Agency's experiences in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Note: It is a Lead Agency decision on how often a plan should be updated and which entities, if any, should be collaborated with in the updating process.)

☐ No

☒ Yes. If yes, describe the elements of the plan that were updated: The Lead Agency established an emergency operational plan following the passage of hurricanes, earthquakes, and the pandemic across the island. This Emergency Operational Plan has been updated to articulate with the new Puerto Rico Joint Operational Catastrophic Incidents Plan (JOCIP), which is comprehensive nature and developed in accordance with the guidelines established by the Department of Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and in collaboration with the FEMA Emergency team. The new emergency plan is comprehensive in nature and its primary purpose is to protect life and property from the risks and dangers to which our service providers and/or employees could be exposed. In order to continue the implementation Plan, the Lead Agency updated state-of-the-art training and workshops related to emergency preparedness and management. The workshops will include orientation about earthquakes, hurricanes, pandemics, fire, crisis management and nutrition for children before, during and after the event. The training program includes the provision of emergency telephones for providers and information on preparing an emergency backpack, family plan preparation, and a checklist they can use to prepare before the hurricane season. The Lead Agency maintains an up-to-date directory of all providers through allocation of funds destined for this activity with their respective addresses, phone numbers, alternate phones, and e-mails. In addition, the directory contains information about whether they have an electric generator, its capacity and if it's operated with gas or gasoline. It also has information on water tanks and their capacity in gallons. In addition to these direct efforts, the Lead Agency collaborates with the licensing office in post event on site visits to confirm that the affected centers can offer adequate services to children and their families. The Puerto Rico Joint Operational Catastrophic Incidents Plan (JOCIP)'s purpose is to define the operational functions, roles, and responsibilities of federal and state agencies before, during and after an incident that is or could be classified as a catastrophic incident. This plan is designed to establish a synchronized operational structure between the federal and state government to carry out activities of preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation for incidents that have the potential or have caused serious damage to the population and infrastructure of Puerto Rico. The JOCIP establishes the operational, logistical, and administrative procedures that will be carried out from the identification of a potential threat for the island until the recovery process after a disaster. Scope: The JOCIP is designed to allow the federal government, represented by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the state government, represented by the Puerto Rico Emergency Management Agency (PREMA) and other state agencies and the private sector to work together before, during and after an incident with catastrophic consequences such as a hurricane category 4 or 5. This document contains the organizational structures and procedures that FEMA and PREMA will carry out during the different phases of the emergency. FEMA will coordinate with federal agencies under the umbrella of the US Department of Homeland Security and will work in coordination with the other branches of the federal government that will provide support before, during and after the incident, particularly to provide assistance in the recovery from a catastrophic event. The Roles and Responsibilities of the federal, state and municipal governments as well as of the private sector and the non-governmental sector in each of the operational phases mentioned above are clearly spelled out in the plan. Each one of the non-

governmental organizations will be responsible for activating their emergency operations plans and the Joint Operational Catastrophic Incident Plan. The Secretary/Executive Director/Administrator/Commissioner of each state agency/office will be responsible for carrying out the activities that are described in this plan and take the executive decisions necessary to fulfill the plan objectives. Information Sharing - Effective communications between all the emergency operations partners will be maintained always. All The Government will make every effort to use all means of communications (radio broadcast, social media, websites, TV ads or others) to keep the population well notified about the emergency and potential risks concerning the incident. The government is responsible for carrying out all training based on the JOCIP to all the governmental employees, including all state agencies. The training will be based on the implementation and execution of this plan with an emphasis on the roles and responsibilities they will have to carry out before, during and after a catastrophic event. The government of Puerto Rico will also perform a series of exercises during the year that will be designed to validate different parts of this plan in its different phases of emergency from pre-incident to recovery. Each agency shall develop at least two Tabletop Exercises and one Full-Scale Exercise annually. Maintenance Plan - This plan is designed as a living and interactive document subject to revisions and continuous changes that will depend not only on the lessons learned in previous events but also on those incidents or events that occur anywhere in the world and that offer consideration that we should integrate into our plan, on new scientific studies and the development of adaptable technologies, as well as those changes suggested by the new federal regulations, presidential guidelines and policies established by the federal government and its national security agencies as well as local ones.

1.8.2 To demonstrate continued compliance with the required elements in the Statewide Disaster Plan, certify by checking the required elements included in the current State Disaster Preparedness and Response Plan.

- ☒ a. The plan was developed in collaboration with the following required entities:
 - ☐ i. State human services agency
 - ☒ ii. State emergency management agency
 - ☒ iii. State licensing agency
 - ☐ iv. State health department or public health department
 - ☐ v. Local and state child care resource and referral agencies
 - ☐ vi. State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body
- ☒ b. The plan includes guidelines for the continuation of child care subsidies.
- ☐ c. The plan includes guidelines for the continuation of child care services.
- ☐ d. The plan includes procedures for the coordination of post-disaster recovery of child care services.
- ☒ e. The plan contains requirements for all CCDF providers (both licensed and license-exempt) to have in place:
 - ☒ i. Procedures for evacuation
 - ☐ ii. Procedures for relocation
 - ☒ iii. Procedures for shelter-in-place
 - ☒ iv. Procedures for communication and reunification with families
 - ☒ v. Procedures for continuity of operations
 - ☒ vi. Procedures for accommodations of infants and toddlers
 - ☒ vii. Procedures for accommodations of children with disabilities
 - ☒ viii. Procedures for accommodations of children with chronic medical conditions
- ☒ f. The plan contains procedures for staff and volunteer emergency preparedness training.
- ☒ g. The plan contains procedures for staff and volunteer practice drills.

1.8.3 If available, provide the direct URL/website link to the website where the statewide child care disaster plan is posted: www.acuden.familia.pr.gov

2 Promote Family Engagement Through Outreach and Consumer Education

Lead Agencies are required to support the role of parents as child care consumers who need information to make informed choices regarding the services that best suit their needs. A key purpose of the CCDBG Act is to “promote involvement by parents and family members in the development of their children in child care settings” (658A(b)). Lead Agencies have the opportunity to consider how information can be provided to parents through the child care assistance system, partner agencies, and child care consumer education websites.

The target audience for the consumer education information includes three groups: parents receiving CCDF assistance, the general public, and when appropriate, child care providers. OCC expects that Lead Agencies are using targeted strategies for each group to ensure tailored consumer education information. In this section, Lead Agencies will address how information is made available to families, the general public and child care providers to assist them in accessing high-quality child care and how information is shared on other financial assistance programs or supports for which a family might be eligible. In addition, Lead Agencies will certify that information on developmental screenings is provided and will describe how research and best practices concerning children’s development, including their social-emotional development, is shared.

This section also covers the parental complaint process and the consumer education website that has been developed by the Lead Agency. Finally, this section addresses the consumer statement that is provided to parents supported with CCDF funds.

Note: When asked for citations, responses can include state statute, regulations, administrative rules, policy manuals, or policy issuances. See the Introduction on page 4 for more detail.

2.1 Outreach to Families with Limited English Proficiency and Persons with Disabilities

The Lead Agency is required to describe how it provides outreach and services to eligible families with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities and to facilitate the participation of child care providers with limited English proficiency and child care providers with disabilities in the CCDF program (98.16(dd)). Lead Agencies are required to develop policies and procedures to clearly communicate program information, such as requirements, consumer education information, and eligibility information, to families and child care providers of all backgrounds (81 FR 67456).

- 2.1.1 Check the strategies the Lead Agency or partners utilize to provide outreach and services to eligible families for whom English is not their first language. Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Application in other languages (application document, brochures, provider notices)
- ☒ b. Informational materials in non-English languages
- ☒ c. Website in non-English languages
- ☒ d. Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations
- ☒ e. Bilingual caseworkers or translators available
- ☐ f. Bilingual outreach workers
- ☒ g. Partnerships with community-based organizations
- ☐ h. Collaboration with Head Start, Early Head Start, and Migrant Head Start
- ☐ i. Home visiting programs
- ☒ j. Other. Describe: [Puerto Rico's primary language is Spanish, followed by the second most used language, English. The Child Care Program's web page as well as all documents are all written in Spanish but they are adapted to English to facilitate its understanding when necessary. An example of this is the web page that allows the consumer to choose the preferred language to access the information.](#)

2.1.2 Check the strategies the Lead Agency or partners utilize to provide outreach and services to eligible families with a person(s) with a disability. Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Applications and public informational materials available in Braille and other communication formats for access by individuals with disabilities
- ☒ b. Websites that are accessible (e.g., Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act)
- ☐ c. Caseworkers with specialized training/experience in working with individuals with disabilities
- ☒ d. Ensuring accessibility of environments and activities for all children
- ☒ e. Partnerships with state and local programs and associations focused on disability-related topics and issues
- ☐ f. Partnerships with parent associations, support groups, and parent-to-parent support groups, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) federally funded Parent Training and Information Centers
- ☒ g. Partnerships with state and local IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C providers and agencies
- ☒ h. Availability and/or access to specialized services (e.g., mental health, behavioral specialists, therapists) to address the needs of all children
- ☐ i. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.2 Parental Complaint Process

The Lead Agency must certify that the state/territory maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request (658E(c)(2)(C); 98.15(b)(3)). Lead Agencies must also provide a detailed description of the hotline or similar reporting process for parents to submit complaints about child care providers; the process for substantiating complaints; the manner in which the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints; and ways that the Lead Agency makes information on such parental complaints available to the public on request (98.16 (s); 98.32(d)).

- 2.2.1 Describe the Lead Agency's hotline or similar reporting process through which parents can submit complaints about child care providers, including a link if it is a Web-based process: [The Child Care Program has a hotline, \(787\) 721-1445, where parents and/or the community can contact ACUDEN regarding complaints or concerns about the provider's services. They can also send an email regarding this matter through \[www.acuden.pr.gov\]\(http://www.acuden.pr.gov\).](#)
- 2.2.2 For complaints regarding all providers, including CCDF providers and non-CCDF providers, describe the Lead Agency's process and timeline for screening, substantiating, and responding to complaints. Describe whether the process includes monitoring, and highlight any differences in processes for CCDF and non-CCDF providers and licensed and license-exempt providers: [All complaints received are immediately evaluated and classified according to their risk and urgency. The complaints related to child abuse or neglect are always the first ones to be addressed, activating the protocol for the prevention and management of child abuse, which requires immediate referral to the Administration for Families and Children \(ADFAN\) Institutional Mistreatment Unit \(IMU\). This agency has the obligation and authority under the law to assess, investigate and intervene, and if necessary, to remove a child or take legal action against a provider. ADFAN keeps us informed by activating the Child Care Programs Office of Licensing's monitoring systems. In cases where the complaint does not pose an immediate risk to the child, the complaint is evaluated and referred for monitoring by Health and Safety to ensure compliance with the standards, prepare a corrective plan and ensure that the concern related to the complaint will be corrected. If the provider fails to correct the non-compliance matter, they are referred to the Licensing Office for a determination of removing their license to operate.](#)
- 2.2.3 Certify by describing how the Lead Agency maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints. Highlight any differences in processes for CCDF and non-CCDF providers and licensed and license-exempt providers: [All identified complaints as Substantiated Parental Complaints are immediately referred to the Institutional Maltreatment Unit \(IMU\) of ADFAN to be investigated. The Child Care Program maintains a log of these referrals for follow-up purposes to ensure that they have been attended. The IMU publishes and maintains a record of the attended cases with their outcomes in the IMU's Central Registry. This office maintains the case records for a five-year period. This process applies to all providers, CCDF and non CCDF](#)
- 2.2.4 Certify by describing how the Lead Agency makes information about substantiated parental complaints available to the public; this information can include the consumer education website discussed in section 2.3: [Regulation 8687, Art. 4.2, states that the Program must maintain a phone line and e-mail contact so that the community in general can report any complaints related to providers about irregularities in the service, caregiving environments that could put the child at risk, inadequate caregiver behavior, etc. In addition, it indicates that any individual may visit the Department of the Family's regional offices, where Child Care Program offices are located, and report any complaint. There is a link on the Child Care Program website where any person may obtain Information about providers with parental substantiated complains as published by ADFAN.](#)
- 2.2.5 Provide the citation to the Lead Agency's policy and process related to parental complaints: [Regulation #8687, Art 4.2](#)

2.3 Consumer Education Website

States and territories are required to provide information to parents, the general public, and when applicable, child care providers through a state website, which is consumer-friendly and easily accessible (658E(c)(2)(E)(i)(III) and 98.33 (a)). The website must include information to assist families in understanding the Lead Agency's policies and procedures, including licensing child care providers. The website information must also include monitoring and inspection reports for each provider, and the quality of each provider (if such information is available for the provider) (658E(c)(2)(D); 98.33(a)). The website should also provide access to a yearly statewide report on the aggregate number of deaths, serious injuries, and the number of cases of substantiated child abuse that have occurred in child care settings. To help families access additional information on finding child care, the website must include contact information for local child care and resource referral organizations. It must also include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency and other organizations to better understand the information on the website.

To certify, respond to questions 2.3.1 through 2.3.10 by describing how the Lead Agency meets these requirements and provide the direct URL/website link to the consumer education website in 2.3.11.

Please note that any changes made to the web links provided below in this section after the CCDF Plan is approved will require a CCDF Plan amendment.

- 2.3.1 Describe how the Lead Agency ensures that its website is consumer-friendly and easily accessible. (Note: While there is no Federal CCDF definition for easily accessible, Lead Agencies may consider easily accessible websites to be searchable, simple to navigate, written in plain language, and easy to understand.): *The Child Care Program has a website that has been designed for the community at large to easily access. It is organized by classifying information pertinent to parents, general resources, and providers. These topics are organized according to interests and cover everything from the basics, like who is eligible, how to apply for services, information on child development, how to become an eligible provider, etc., all explained in a simple way that is easy to understand. It also provides access to information resources in a quick way, such as Program procedures and regulations, and connecting through links to other agencies allowing easy access of the information*
- 2.3.2 Describe how the website ensures the widest possible access to services for families that speak languages other than English (98.33(a)): *The website is in Spanish because it is Puerto Rico's principal language, although it offers the capacity to use Google Translate so that consumers can access the information in the language of their choice*
- 2.3.3 Describe how the website ensures the widest possible access to services for persons with disabilities: *The Child Care Program's website is reviewed by the State Assistive Technology Program to verify compliance with appropriate access to information for disabled individuals. This program is in accordance with State Law 229 of 2003. In addition, to enhance accessibility, the website features a user-friendly tool for disabled persons called Userway. This tool facilitates access to information by adapting the format of the web page for changes in fonts, font sizes, spaces between lines, light contrasts, use different types of cursor, among other uses*
- 2.3.4 Provide the specific website links to the descriptions of the Lead Agency's processes related to child care.

A required component of the consumer education website is a description of Lead Agency policies and procedures relating to child care (98.33(a)(1)). This information includes a description of how the state/territory licenses child care, a rationale for exempting providers from licensing requirements, the procedure for conducting monitoring and inspections of providers, and the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks.

- a. Provide the direct URL/website link to how the Lead Agency licenses child care providers, including the rationale for exempting certain providers from licensing requirements, as described in subsection 5.2: www.acuden.pr.gov
- b. Provide the direct URL/website link to the processes for conducting monitoring and inspections of child care providers, as described in subsection 5.4: www.acuden.pr.gov
- c. Provide the direct URL/website link to the policies and procedures related to criminal background checks for staff members of child care providers, as described in 5.5.2. www.acuden.pr.gov
- d. Provide the direct URL/website link to the offenses that prevent individuals from being employed by a child care provider or receiving CCDF funds, as described in questions 5.5.4: www.acuden.pr.gov

2.3.5 How does the Lead Agency post a localized list of providers searchable by zip code on its website?

The consumer education website must include a list of all licensed providers (98.33 (a)(2)). At the discretion of the Lead Agency, all providers eligible to deliver CCDF services, identified as either licensed or license-exempt, can be included. Providers caring for children to whom they are related do not need to be included. The list of providers must be searchable by ZIP Code.

- a. Provide the website link to the list of child care providers searchable by ZIP code: www.acuden.pr.gov
- b. In addition to the licensed providers that are required to be included in your searchable list, are there additional providers included in the Lead Agency's searchable list of child care providers (please check all that apply)?
 - ☐ i. License-exempt center-based CCDF providers
 - ☐ ii. License-exempt family child care (FCC) CCDF providers
 - ☐ iii. License-exempt non-CCDF providers
 - ☐ iv. Relative CCDF child care providers
 - ☐ v. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- c. Identify what informational elements, if any, are available in the searchable results. Note: Quality information (if available) and monitoring results are required on the website but are not required to be a part of the search results. Check the box when information is provided.

Provider Information Available in Searchable Results					
	All Licensed Providers	License-Exempt CCDF Center-based Providers	License-Exempt CCDF Family Child Care Home Providers	License-Exempt Non-CCDF Providers	Relative CCDF Providers
Contact Information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enrollment capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hours, days and months of operation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provider education and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Languages spoken by the caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring reports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Willingness to accept CCDF certificates.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ages of children served	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

d. Other information included for:

- ☒ i. All Licensed providers. [The date of the last monitored visit, substantiated situations of abuse, serious child accidents or deaths that occurred in the center.](#)
- ☐ ii. License-exempt CCDF center-based providers. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ iii. License-exempt CCDF family child care providers. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ iv. License-exempt, non-CCDF providers. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ v. Relative CCDF providers. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.3.6 Lead Agencies must also identify specific quality information on each child care provider for whom they have this information. The type of information provided is determined by the Lead Agency, and it should help families easily understand whether a provider offers services that meet Lead Agency-specific best practices and standards or a nationally recognized, research-based set of criteria. Provider-specific quality information must only be posted on the consumer website if it is available for the individual provider.

a. What information does the Lead Agency provide on the website to determine quality ratings or other quality information?

- ☐ i. Quality rating and improvement system
- ☐ ii. National accreditation
- ☐ iii. Enhanced licensing system
- ☐ iv. Meeting Head Start/Early Head Start Program Performance Standards
- ☐ v. Meeting Prekindergarten quality requirements
- ☐ vi. School-age standards, where applicable
- ☒ vii. Other. Describe: [Pasitos, the QIRS, is updating de assessment tool to start the evaluation process to those volunteer providers and post results](#)

b. For what types of providers are quality ratings or other indicators of quality available?

- ☒ i. Licensed CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ ii. Licensed non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ iii. License-exempt center-based CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ iv. License-exempt FCC CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ v. License-exempt non-CCDF providers. Describe the quality information:
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ vii. Relative child care providers. Describe the quality information:
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ viii. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.3.7 Lead Agencies must post monitoring and inspection reports on the consumer education website for each licensed provider and for each non-relative provider eligible to provide CCDF services. These reports must include the results of required annual monitoring visits, and visits due to major substantiated complaints about a provider's failure to comply with health and safety requirements and child care policies. A full report covers everything in the monitoring visit, including areas of compliance and non-compliance. If the state does not produce any reports that include areas of compliance, the website must include information about all areas covered by a monitoring visit (e.g., by posting a blank checklist used by monitors).

The reports must be in plain language or provide a plain language summary, as defined by the state or territory, and be timely to ensure that the results of the reports are available and easily understood by parents when they are deciding on a child care provider. Lead Agencies must post at least 3 years of reports.

Certify by responding to the questions below:

a. Does the Lead Agency post? (check one):

- ☒ i. Full monitoring reports that include areas of compliance and non-compliance.
- ☐ ii. Monitoring reports that include areas of non-compliance only, with information about all areas covered by a monitoring visit posted separately on the website (e.g., a blank checklist used by monitors). Note: This option is only allowable if the state/territory does not produce monitoring reports that include both areas of compliance and non-compliance. If checked, provide a direct URL/website link to the website where a blank checklist is posted. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- b. Check to certify that the monitoring and inspection reports and, if necessary, their plain language summaries include:
- ☒ Date of inspection
 - ☒ Health and safety violations, including those violations that resulted in fatalities or serious injuries occurring at the provider. Describe how these health and safety violations are prominently displayed: [The number of fatalities or serious injuries by each of the providers is identified in their profile that is included in the directory](#)
 - ☐ Corrective action plans taken by the state and/or child care provider. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ A minimum of 3 years of results, where available.
- c. How and where are reports posted in a timely manner? Specifically, provide the Lead Agency's definition of "timely" and describe how it ensures that reports and/or summaries are posted within its timeframe. Note: While Lead Agencies may define "timely," we recommend Lead Agencies update results as soon as possible and no later than 90 days after an inspection or corrective action is taken.
- i. Provide the direct URL/website link to where the reports are posted. www.acuden.pr.gov
 - ii. Describe how the Lead Agency defines timely posting of monitoring reports. www.acuden.pr.gov
- d. Monitoring and inspection reports or the summaries must be in plain language to meet the CCDF regulatory requirements (98.33 (a)(4)).
- i. Provide the Lead Agency's definition of plain language. [Is defined as a language that does not include technical or specialized terminology so it can be understood by a person who is not related to the Program and who can understand the results even if they have an basic literary level](#)
 - ii. Describe how the monitoring and inspection reports or the summaries are in plain language. [The reports use plain language to ensure that parents can understand it as well as easy to be use by providers. During the evaluation process a monitor or inspector is available to explain any concept.](#)
- e. Describe the process for correcting inaccuracies in reports (98.33 (a)(4)). [Before publishing the monitoring and inspection reports, they are discussed with the providers to ensure that their findings are correct. This report is signed by the provider and the monitor. If an error is however published in the report results, the provider immediately notifies the Health and Safety Area via phone, email or in person at the Central or Regional Office, and if it is necessary, the report is amended and corrected on the website](#)
- f. Describe the process for providers to appeal the findings in reports. Description of the process should include the time requirements and timeframes for:

- filing the appeal
- conducting the investigation
- removal of any violations from the website determined on appeal to be unfounded.

Any provider who does not agree with the results of the evaluation may submit a complaint to the ACUDEN Central Office to be attended with the Supervisors of the Health and Safety Area. A meeting is arranged between the parties to discuss the differences and if necessary, the care center is re-visited to investigate and rectify the findings. If the findings remain in the report and the provider disagrees, the provider may request an Adjudicative Hearing before the Department of Family Services Adjudicative Board, in accordance with Child Care Program Regulation 8687. This can be done through mail, email, or by visiting ACUDEN's regional or central offices or the Department of the Family. The Board will hear the appeal within 15 days of submission, and in accordance with Regulation 7757 which stipulates the Department of the Family's dispute adjudication process

- Describe the process for maintaining monitoring and inspection reports on the website. Specifically, provide the minimum number of years reports are posted and the policy for removing reports (98.33(a)(4)(iv)). The monitoring reports are published on the ACUDEN website in a period that does not exceed thirty (30) days after the inspection. These reports are kept published for three (3) years, before they are eliminated from the web page. If any person requires a report with more than three years, he must send to ACUDEN Central Office justifying the need of information.

- 2.3.8 Aggregate data on serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of child abuse that have occurred in child care settings each year must be posted by Lead Agencies on the consumer education website (98.33(a)(5)). The serious incident aggregate data should include information about any child in the care of a provider eligible to receive CCDF, not just children receiving subsidies.

This aggregate information on serious injuries and deaths must be separated by category of care (e.g. centers, family child care homes, and in-home care) and licensing status (i.e. licensed or license-exempt) for all eligible CCDF providers in the state. The information on instances of substantiated child abuse does not have to be organized by category of care or licensing status. Information should also include the total number of children regulated to be cared for by provider type and licensing status (81 FR, p. 67477), so that families can view the serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated cases of abuse data in context. The aggregate report should not include individual provider-specific information or names.

- Certify by providing:
 - The designated entity to which child care providers must submit reports of any serious injuries or deaths of children occurring in child care (98.16 (ff)) and describe how the Lead Agency obtains the aggregate data from the entity. The Administration of Families and Children (ADFAN) and its office known as the Institutional Mistreatment Unit (IMU) is the agency responsible for investigating and determining serious injuries and/or child deaths which occur in any childcare center in Puerto Rico. The IMU keeps records of the results of its investigations which are included in the Central Registry. ADFAN under an interagency agreement provides the Child Care Program with all the necessary information regarding abuse issues at the centers for publication on the Child Care website on a quarterly basis
 - The definition of "substantiated child abuse" used by the Lead Agency for this requirement. The definitions are consistent with those established by ADFAN and are classified as mistreatment and institutional mistreatment. Abuse is any intentional act or omission committed by the father, mother, or person responsible of the minor of such nature that causes or places the minor at risk of suffering harm or damage to their health, physical, mental and/or emotional integrity, including sexual abuse, as

defined in Act No. 246-2011. It also shall be considered mistreatment to incur in obscene conduct and/or the use of a minor to perform obscene conduct; to allow another person to cause or place at risk of suffering harm or damage to the physical, mental and/or emotional health and integrity of a minor; voluntary abandonment of a minor; that the parent or person responsible for the minor exploits the minor or allows another to do so by forcing or allowing the minor to perform any act, including, but not limited to, using the minor to perform obscene conduct, for the purpose of profiting or receiving any other benefit; incurring in conduct that, if criminally prosecuted, would constitute a crime against the physical, mental, emotional health and integrity, including sexual abuse of the minor. Likewise, it shall be considered that a child is a victim of abuse if the father, mother, or responsible person of the child has incurred in the described conduct or has incurred in conduct constituting domestic violence in the presence of minors, as defined in Act No. 54-1989, as amended. On the other hand, Institutional Abuse is any act committed by an operator of a foster home or any employee or official of a public or private institution that offers child care services during a twenty-four (24) hour day or part of it, or that has under its control or custody a minor for his or her care, education, treatment or detention, that causes harm or places a minor at risk of harm to his or her physical, mental and/or emotional health and integrity, including, but not limited to, sexual abuse; engaging in obscene conduct and/or using a minor to engage in obscene conduct, known or suspected or occurring as a result of the policy, practices and conditions prevailing in the institution concerned; exploiting a minor or allowing another to exploit a minor, including, but not limited to, using a minor to engage in obscene conduct, for profit or other gain.

- iii. The definition of “serious injury” used by the Lead Agency for this requirement. The definitions used by the Program are in accordance with those established by ADFAN. Physical Abuse: any non-accidental trauma, injury, or condition, including a lack of food that, if left untreated, could result in death, disfigurement, illness or temporary or permanent disability of any part or function of the body, including lack of food. Also, the trauma, injury or condition may be the product of a single episode or multiple episodes. Abuse involving Mental or Emotional Harm: the intellectual or emotional impairment of the child to an extent considered normal for the child's age and cultural environment. Additionally, emotional harm shall be present when there is evidence that the minor recurrently manifests or exhibits behaviors such as: fear, feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, frustration and failure, anxiety, feelings of insecurity, isolation, aggressive or regressive behavior or any other similar behavior that demonstrates the vulnerability of a minor emotionally
- b. Certify by checking below that the required elements are included in the Aggregate Data Report on serious incident data that have occurred in child care settings each year.
 - ☒ i. the total number of serious injuries of children in care by provider category/licensing status
 - ☒ ii. the total number of deaths of children in care by provider category/licensing status
 - ☒ iii. the total number of substantiated instances of child abuse in child care settings
 - ☐ iv. the total number of children in care by provider category/licensing status
- c. Provide the website link to the page where the aggregate number of serious injuries, deaths, and substantiated instances of child abuse are posted. www.acuden.pr.gov

- 2.3.9 The consumer education website must include contact information on referrals to local child care resource and referral organizations (98.33 (a)(6)). How does the Lead Agency provide referrals to local CCR&R agencies through the consumer education website? Describe and include a website link to this information: [The CENTRANA and the Two Gen resources and referral centers, with two located in the San Juan metropolitan area and the others located in different municipalities. All this information is posted on ACUDEN's website and is also promoted locally through referrals from the Program's regional offices or through childcare centers. Also, a directory of agencies that provide support services to parents participating in the Child Care Program is posted on the ACUDEN website](#)
- 2.3.10 The consumer education website must include information on how parents can contact the Lead Agency, or its designee, or other programs that can help the parent understand information included on the website (98.33 (a)(7)). Describe and include a website link to this information: [The agency's website is \[www.acuden.pr.gov\]\(http://www.acuden.pr.gov\), or <https://childcare.familia.pr.gov>, which provides a directory of Central and Regional offices where the participant can obtain more details about our services and request orientation. It also includes a contact section where people may send an information request directly to the program.](#)

- 2.3.11 Provide the website link to the Lead Agency's consumer education website. Note: An amendment is required if this website changes. www.acuden.pr.gov

2.4 Additional Consumer and Provider Education

Lead Agencies are required to certify that they will collect and disseminate information about the full diversity of child care services to promote parental choice to parents of eligible children, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers. In addition to the consumer education website, the consumer education information can be provided through CCR&R organizations or through direct conversations with eligibility case workers and child care providers. Outreach and counseling can also be effectively provided via information sessions or intake processes for families (658E(c)(2)(E); 98.15(b)(4); 98.33(b)).

In questions 2.4.1 through 2.4.5, certify by describing:

- 2.4.1 How the Lead Agency shares information with eligible parents, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers about the availability of child care services provided through CCDF and other programs for which the family may be eligible, such as state Prekindergarten, as well as the availability of financial assistance to obtain child care services. At a minimum, describe what is provided (e.g., such methods as written materials, the website, and direct communications) and how information is tailored for these audiences. [ACUDEN uses several strategies to promote the childcare services it provides, among these strategies are the use both the agencies and the Department of the Family's website, including the use of social networks such as Facebook and Instagram. Orientations are also offered to potential applicants that visit the regional offices seeking information about childcare services, and CCR&R information centers are also used. The municipalities under contract with ACUDEN provide childcare services promotion to their communities in response to their needs. Meetings are held with the Care Center Owners Association and the Child Services Association to share updated information of the program and facilitate dissemination to their members. Literature \(brochures\) are used to promote these services. MOUs with state agencies and non-profit agencies that serve children and youth through partnerships with providers. The way and content of the information provided is tailored for the audience to ensure understanding and be effective in promoting the services.](#)
- 2.4.2 How does the Lead Agency provide the required information about the following programs and benefits to the parents of eligible children, the general public, and where applicable, providers? Certify by describing for each program listed below, at a minimum, what information is provided, how the information is provided, and how the information is tailored to a variety of audiences. Include any partners who assist in providing this information.
- a. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program: [The TANF Program is a part of the Department of Family Services and therefore we work through referral agreements to prioritize services for participating families. In addition, the ACUDEN website has a link to access information about the TANF Program.](#)
 - b. Head Start and Early Head Start programs: [ACUDEN is the lead agency for both CCDF and HS programs, which facilitates the service coordination between programs](#)
 - c. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): [The ADSEF Program is a part of the Department of Family Services and therefore we work through referral agreements to prioritize services for participating families. In addition, the ACUDEN website has a link to access information about the ADSEF Program.](#)
 - d. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): [ADSEF is the lead agency for this program, and it is under the Department of Family Services, currently there are service referral agreements between the two programs. In addition, our website has a link to access the ADSEF website.](#)

- e. Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) program: [ACUDEN established a Memorandum of Understanding that establishes coordination and the facilitation of services between the two agencies.](#)
- f. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): [ADSEF](#)
- g. Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- h. Programs carried out under IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C:
[ACUDEN has in place mutual assistance agreements to serve Program participants. These agreements are based on the children's needs while participating in the ASQ screening. Children are referred to the Department of Health or the Department of Education in accordance with their age](#)

2.4.3 Describe how the Lead Agency makes information available to parents, providers and the general public on research and best practices concerning children’s development, including physical health and development, particularly healthy eating and physical activity and information about successful parent and family engagement. The description should include:

- what information is provided
- how the information is provided
- how the information is tailored to a variety of audiences, including:
 - parents
 - providers
 - the general public
- any partners in providing this information

Description: [Through the agency's website, you can find general information on topics of interest to parents, providers, and the community. The Resources link includes topics ranging from research and law publications to regulations and protocols related to childcare services.](#)

2.4.4 Describe how information on the Lead Agency’s policies regarding the social-emotional and behavioral issues and mental health of young children, including positive behavioral intervention and support models based on research and best practices for those from birth to school age, are shared with families, providers, and the general public. At a minimum, include

- what information is provided,
- how the information is provided, and
- how information is tailored to a variety of audiences, and
- include any partners in providing this information.

Description: The Puerto Rico Child Care Program's goal, policies and objectives is to promote children's social and emotional development and the Prevention of Challenging Behavior using the CSEFEL's Pyramid Model of Intervention in Social-Emotional Development. This model offers an effective conceptual system strategy for family and primary caregivers, which promotes positive behavior, emotional management, the reduction of challenging behaviors including reducing expulsions among preschool children and fostering the development of a secure relationship (attachment) between children with both their family and their caregiver. In addition, as part of the screening, we use the ASEQ SE 2 Questionnaire to assess the behavioral and social-emotional development of children in early childhood. This tool helps us to ensure that children's social-emotional development is occurring according to the expectations. The objectives of the Social-Emotional Development Intervention Model we use include the following: Developing positive relationships between adults and children, as well as families and other professionals; Designing environments that foster children's success by engaging them in meaningful activities, teaching them about environmental expectations, as well as implementing a predictable schedule that involves each child; Implementing effective social-emotional teaching strategies; Strategizing about the use of using the "Positive Behavior Support" process to address the needs of children who exhibit intense and persistent hard-to-manage behavior; Offering support in the administrative processes that are needed to adopt and maintain the model's practices and strategies. For professionals working with children birth to 5 years of age, strategies are provided for: Social-emotional development within the context of relationships; Flexible routines, environments, and strategies to support social-emotional development; Individualized interventions to determine the meaning of behavior and the development of appropriate interventions; Develop a Plan to Support Behavior; Develop leadership strategies to support development and address hard-to-manage behavior. To work with Families, sessions called "Positive Choices for Families" have been developed to provide families with strategies for: Building positive relationships, spending time together, positive comments and praise. Play as a powerful practice in children's education, ways to support the development of friendship skills and encourage positive behavior will be discussed. Determining the significance of behavior, ways to clearly express expectations, developing and teaching house rules. Emotional vocabulary, dealing with anger and disappointment, ways to solve problems. Strategies for preventing unmanageable behavior, developing a Family Plan and family routine. Within the procedures, the inclusion and orientation to the family on the social-emotional development model and the instruments to be used for screening in this area is encouraged, in addition to the discussion of results and plans to work for the adequate development of their children. Training and technical assistance is offered to personnel hired by the Providers through delegated funds and Managed Centers, in all aspects related to the social-emotional development of children at early ages. The families impacted through the delegated and managed centers sign a family pledge in which they commit to integrate and collaborate in the development of their sons and daughters. On the other hand, the public is offered talks on socio-emotional development and more details about this information can be accessed on the Program's website

- 2.4.5 Describe the Lead Agency's policies to prevent the suspension and expulsion of children from birth to age 5 in child care and other early childhood programs receiving CCDF funds (98.16(ee)), including how those policies are shared with families, providers, and the general public. The Child Care Program developed the No Suspension No Expulsion Protocol based on the appropriate practices and standards set in the Caring for Our Children and the policies set in state and federal CCDF law. This protocol is discussed with families in the initial orientation, in addition to training educational staff on appropriate case management. The document is published on the ACUDEN website. This protocol has the following purpose: The purpose of this protocol is to create procedures to assist childcare centers, families, and children to prevent, limit and eventually eliminate expulsion and suspension from childcare and development centers. This will ensure appropriate practices to assure the safety and overall health of preschool children. This intervention model is based on the concept of social-emotional development where the most important principle is to establish a safe and caring relationship between the child and his or her primary caregiver so that the child's social-emotional development can occur normally. Establishing healthy attachment relationships with children is the foundation of the Social-Emotional Development Intervention Model at all levels of early childhood. Any primary caregiver, teacher, teacher assistant, or any adult involved in the development and care of an early childhood child should implement the Social-Emotional Development Intervention Model. The Social-Emotional Development Intervention Model is based on the Pyramid Model (CSEFEL) established by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Learning. The Pyramid is a model that represents components that can be used to help children develop healthy and appropriate social-emotional competence. The Pyramid Model describes the interlocking levels of practices that address the social and emotional development of all children. It is designed to: Guide the practitioner to understand the importance of social-emotional development and the prevention of hard-to-manage behavior. Respond to a Public Health model. Prevent children from having intensive intervention. The principles within the Social Emotional Development Intervention Model are: Support the social and emotional development of young children to prevent difficult to manage behaviors. Individualize interventions to match the interests, strengths and particularities of children and their families. Encourage skill development with sufficient intensity to result in desired behavioral changes. Implement strategies within the context of natural routines and environments. Ensure fidelity of use through a systematic process for making changes. Modify strategies to correspond to the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and children. Prevent early childhood suspension and expulsion from preschool developmental settings. When children exhibit or engage in challenging behaviors that cannot be easily resolved staff should: Evaluate the child's health and the adequacy of the curriculum in meeting the child's educational and developmental needs. To immediately engage with the parents/guardians/family in a collaborative spirit regarding how the child's behaviors may best be addressed, including appropriate solutions that have worked at home or in other settings. To access an early childhood mental health consultant to help develop an effective plan for dealing with the child's challenging behaviors and to assist the child in developing age-appropriate, pro-social skills. Facilitate, with the family's assistance, a referral for an evaluation for either Part C (early intervention) or B (preschool special education), as well as any other community-based services. Facilitate the family's communication with a child's primary care provider (e.g., pediatrician, family medicine doctor, etc.), so that the primary care physician can assess them for any related health problems and help facilitate the appropriate referrals. Some of the reasons for expulsion, suspension, or limiting childcare services can include: Continued aggressive behavior clearly endangers the physical safety of the child, peers, and adults. The assessment by a qualified mental health consultant and all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified child mental health consultant aimed to provide a physically safe environment has been exhausted and the family is unwilling to participate in mental health consultation which has been provided by the childcare program or independently. The family does not collaborate, follow the recommendations and child intervention plan available in the community. When the service does not meet the child's social and emotional needs as agreed upon by staff and family and a different program has been identified that is better able to meet the needs that have been identified and can immediately provide services for the child. The procedure for Behavior Management in Care Settings is as follows: Meet the children and establish attachment relationships. The teacher/primary caregiver will conduct meetings with the family to receive information about their children. The teacher/primary caregiver will discuss

documentation with the family, e.g., Developmental History. The teacher/primary caregiver will perform nurturing behaviors associated with infant and toddler care necessary for attachment, e.g., holding, rocking, kissing, gazing, singing, feeding. The quality and quantity of these attachment-building experiences are crucial factors. The teacher/primary caregiver will ensure up to 8 weeks of adjustment. The teacher/primary caregiver will create a caring learning community as outlined in Appropriate Practices. The primary teacher/caregiver will apply the strategies offered in the Pyramid Model of Social-Emotional Development Modules. Conduct chronological age-appropriate screenings according to their social-emotional skills. The screening and assessment will be conducted using the ASQ SE Questionnaires and the Portage Guide, following each procedure. The strengths and particularities of the children will be identified; this will be the basis for planning appropriate activities. Adapt the developmental environment to the needs of the children. The teacher/primary caregiver will change the environment according to the Weekly Planning and Study Topics. The primary teacher/caregiver will use the Peace Corner (area of interest) and set it up with materials related to emotions, feelings, and relaxation. The teacher/primary caregiver will provide materials for activities to prevent unwanted behavior; emotional vocabulary, recognizing feelings, reading stories, rules, turtle technique, traffic light technique, breathing, among others. Adapt daily routines and activities to children's needs. The teacher/primary caregiver will establish a flexible and balanced routine. The teacher/primary caregiver will establish structure in a consistent and flexible manner. The teacher/primary caregiver will conduct large group and small group activities. The teacher/primary caregiver will conduct individualized activities. The teacher/primary caregiver will conduct activities in and out of the developmental environment. The teacher/primary caregiver will conduct child-initiated and adult-guided activities. The teacher/primary caregiver will provide or negotiate additional time when children need to complete a task or activity. The teacher/primary caregiver will allow children to choose homework, topics of study, centers of interest, and so forth. Identify the meaning of the behavior demonstrated by the children. The teacher/primary caregiver will conduct purposeful observations, using appropriate documents and instruments, and then conduct an analysis of the information obtained. The teacher/primary caregiver will identify temperaments to adjust strategies. The teacher/primary caregiver will identify health conditions that may lead to undesirable behavior. The teacher/primary caregiver will identify needs through screening results, assessment. PISF or IEP, e.g., Speech and Language Impairment. Primary teacher/caregiver will identify external factors affecting undesirable behavior. Design effective social-emotional teaching strategies. The teacher/primary caregiver will design strategies set out in the Pyramid Model; Building positive relationships Establishing clear and simple rules with children Being consistent Using positive praise and commentary Developing friendship skills Teaching emotional vocabulary Managing anger and disappointment Problem solving through example situations Filling the gas tank. The teacher/primary caregiver will design Individualized Intervention Plans. Teacher/primary caregiver will share information and strategies with family. The teacher/primary caregiver will offer guidance to the family on social-emotional development. Refer the case the primary teacher/caregiver will refer the case to the appropriate Region's Assistant Coordinator after all strategies have been exhausted. The teacher/primary caregiver will use the Referral Document to provide a brief description of the child's behavior. The teacher/primary caregiver will include copies of the ASQ 3, ASQ SE and Daily Observations Questionnaires with the Referral. The teacher/primary caregiver will keep the required documentation in the Developmental Portfolio up to date. The Assistant Coordinator will visit to assess the case, evaluate environment, personal relationships, daily schedule, social-emotional development strategies, developmental activities, family factor, management of special conditions. Provide technical assistance in all matters related to social-emotional development using as a reference the Pyramid Model of social-emotional development and the Non-Suspension Non-Expulsion Protocol and coordinate services with Avanzando Juntos or the Department of Education. Intervene with the family if necessary. If the behavior remains difficult to manage, the Assistant Coordinator will refer the case to the Child Development Unit at Central Office for coordination of services from a human behavior specialist through the service agencies that support the Program.

2.5 Procedures for Providing Information on Developmental Screenings

Lead Agencies are required to provide information on developmental screenings to parents, the general public and, when applicable, child care providers. Information should include:

- Existing resources and services that the state can use in conducting developmental screenings and providing referrals to services for children who receive child care assistance.
- Lead Agencies must also include a description of how a family or child care provider can use these resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for children who receive subsidies and who might be at risk of cognitive or other developmental delays, which can include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays (658E(c)(2)(E)(ii)).

This information about the resources can include the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program carried out under title XIX of the Social Security Act and developmental screening services available under IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C, in conducting those developmental screenings and in providing referrals to services for children who receive subsidies. Lead Agencies are required to provide this information to eligible families during CCDF intake and to child care providers through training and education (98.33(c)). Information on developmental screenings, as other consumer education information, should be accessible for individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities.

2.5.1 Certify by describing:

- a. How the Lead Agency collects and disseminates information on existing resources and services available for conducting developmental screenings to CCDF parents, the general public, and where applicable, child care providers (98.15(b)(3)).
As part of the curricular procedures, all families that are served by delegated providers and managed centers undergo an initial orientation by the educational area in which they are provided with information on the instruments to be used in the screening process, assessment, continuous evaluation, and referral, among other aspects. When the screening process is completed, the child's needs are established and those children who are at risk of a developmental deficiency are identified. The information is discussed with the family in individual meetings. When the information is shared, a referral is made for specialized evaluation and the coordination of available services in the community or from governmental agencies. The general population is provided with information about available services and resources for screening and specialized evaluations through the website
- b. The procedures for providing information on and referring families and child care providers to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program—carried out under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)—and developmental screening services available under Part B, Section 619 and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.).
Puerto Rico's Child Care Program follows the Child Care Referral and Screening Procedure, which aims to comply with developmental screening requirements and coordinates services for the child. The procedure stipulates that the instruments to be used for these purposes are the ASQ 3, ASQ SE 2 and M CHAT R/F Questionnaires. When the family is eligible for the program and before the child begins the service in the developmental environment, the family is oriented to all aspects of the child's development, basic information is obtained from the child and the family. After that initial orientation and once the child has begun receiving services, an adjustment period is given, which can last up to 8 weeks. After the child is adjusted, the screening and assessment period begins, which lasts 45 working days. During this period both the educational staff and the family work with the screening instruments, which are the ASQ 3, ASQ SE 2, M CHAT R/F and the Portage Guide. After the results of the screening are tabulated based on the results of the screening, it is determined if a referral for evaluation and

diagnosis is needed. The agencies authorized by law to perform screenings are the Department of Health and the Department of Education (Part C and Part B of the IDEA). In the discussion of the screening and assessment, the family is oriented about the service coordination process, if necessary, the family is given referrals to take to the primary care physician and the appropriate agency. If the child is finally diagnosed with a developmental deficiency, we work with the recommendations of the specialists and monitor the child's development periodically to ensure the impact of the strategies on the child's development. As for the public, a link is provided on the website through which they can obtain information on the agencies where they can receive evaluations, diagnoses, and services

- c. How the Lead Agency gives information on developmental screenings to parents receiving a subsidy as part of the intake process. Include the information provided, ways it is provided, and any partners in this work. Under the Child Care Program's Curriculum Procedures, both the educational staff of delegated providers and the managed centers must hold three meetings a year to discuss the results of the screening and assessment instruments and set goals with the family to work with the children's development; this is done with both regular children and children with special needs. Under the Child Care Program's Curriculum Procedures, the educational staff of the delegated providers and the managed centers should hold three meetings a year to discuss the results of the screening and assessment instruments and establish goals with the family to work on the children's development, this is done both with regular children as well as with children with special needs
- d. How CCDF families or child care providers receiving CCDF can use the available resources and services to obtain developmental screenings for CCDF children at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays. The Puerto Rico Child Care Program establishes in their Procedure for Screening and Referral that all children served by delegated providers and managed centers must be screened for the detection of developmental disabilities using the ASQ 3, ASE SE 2 and M CHAT R/ questionnaires, and referrals must be made if necessary. In addition, the Child Care Program is aligned with the Department of Health through the Avanzando Juntos Program since the same instruments are used. The Avanzando Juntos Program responds to Part C of the IDEA and receives families referred by the Child Care Program for specialized evaluations and services. We also coordinate with the Department of Education, which is Part B of IDEA. Those families who cannot have their children screened because they do not receive services through either a delegated provider or a managed center are offered information through the website on where they can receive available services
- e. How child care providers receive this information through training and professional development. The Professional Development Plan establishes the required competencies and domains that all persons working with children through the Child Care Program and required by the Licensing Office must have. One of the areas is related to the aspects of screening and referral. Training is provided to staff to develop skills in the use and management of screening instruments, early child development, inclusion, observation, among other topics related to screening and the special needs population.
- f. Provide the citation for this policy and procedure related to providing information on developmental screenings. Child Care Regulation 8687, Ch. 5, 5.2.B, states the importance of evaluating the child's development using a variety of assessments that identifies the child's needs. This requires the training and technical assistance for teachers and their assistants. The Child Care Program establishes an annual professional development plan that responds to compliance with this Regulation requirement

2.6 Consumer Statement for Parents Receiving CCDF Funds

Lead Agencies must provide CCDF parents with a consumer statement in hard copy or electronically (such as referral to a consumer education website) that contains specific information about the child care provider they select (98.33 d). Please note that if the consumer statement is provided electronically, Lead Agencies should consider ensuring the statement is accessible to parents, including parents with limited access to the internet, and that parents have a way to contact someone to address their questions.

2.6.1 Certify by describing:

- a. How and when the Lead Agency provides parents receiving CCDF funds with a consumer statement identifying the requirements for providers and the health and safety record of the provider they have selected. *At the time of requesting services, the parent is oriented about the Health and Safety standards that the provider must meet and are provided with a list of those that are following the Program's requirements so they may select the provider they feel best meets their needs. They also could visit the centers and check out the facilities before making their final selection.*
- b. Certify by checking below the specific information provided to families either in hard copy or electronically. Note: The consumer statement must include the eight requirements listed in the table below.
 - ☒ Health and safety requirements met by the provider
 - ☒ Licensing or regulatory requirements met by the provider
 - ☒ Date the provider was last inspected
 - ☒ Any history of violations of these requirements
 - ☒ Any voluntary quality standards met by the provider
 - ☒ How CCDF subsidies are designed to promote equal access
 - ☒ How to submit a complaint through the hotline
 - ☐ How to contact a local resource and referral agency or other community-based organization to receive assistance in finding and enrolling in quality child care
- c. Provide a link to a sample consumer statement or a description if a link is not available.
Click or tap here to enter text.

3 Provide Stable Child Care Financial Assistance to Families

In providing child care assistance to families, Lead Agencies are required to implement these policies and procedures: a minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination period, a process to account for irregular fluctuations in earnings, a policy ensuring that families' work schedules are not disrupted by program requirements, policies to provide for a job search of no fewer than 3 months if the Lead Agency exercises the option to discontinue assistance, and policies for the graduated phase-out of assistance. In addition, the Lead Agency is also required to describe procedures for the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness and, if applicable, children in foster care.

Note: Lead Agencies are not prohibited from establishing policies that extend eligibility beyond 12 months to align program requirements. For example, Lead Agencies can allow children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start, state or local Prekindergarten, and other collaborative programs to finish the program year or, similarly, parents enrolled in school can have eligibility extended to allow parents to finish their school year. This type of policy promotes continuity for families receiving services through multiple benefit programs.

In this section, Lead Agencies will identify how they define eligible children and families and how the Lead Agency improves access for vulnerable children and families. This section also addresses the policies that protect working families and determine a family's contribution to the child care payment.

Note: When asked for citations, responses can include state statute, regulations, administrative rules, policy manuals or policy issuances. See the Introduction on page 4 for more detail.

3.1 Eligible Children and Families

At the time when eligibility is determined or redetermined, children must (1) be younger than age 13; (2) reside with a family whose income does not exceed 85 percent of the state's median income for a family of the same size and whose family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (as certified by a member of said family); and (3)(a) reside with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program or (b) receives, or needs to receive, protective services and resides with a parent or parents not described in (3)(a) (658P(4); 98.20(a)).

3.1.1 Eligibility criteria: Age of children served

- a. The CCDF program serves children from [birth](#) (weeks/months/years) through [twelve](#) years (under age 13). *Note:* Do not include children incapable of self-care or under court supervision, who are reported below in (b) and (c).
- b. Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care (658E(c)(3)(B); 658P(3))?
☐ No
☒ Yes, and the upper age is [18](#) (may not equal or exceed age 19). If yes, provide the Lead Agency definition of physical and/or mental incapacity: [An Individual between 12 and 18 years of age who presents a physical, mental or sensory condition than substantially limits one or more of his or her basic daily activities as defined in Regulation 8687, Art 1.4, No. 38. Also in the event of declaration of a state or federal emergency, like the COVID19 Pandemic, Child Care Services can be provided to children between the ages of 13 and 18, who are unable to care for themselves and their parents are working or in school and would require child care services while their children are participating in distance learning. This condition applies for the use of CARES, CRRSA and ARPA funds](#)
- c. Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children ages 13 and older but below age 19 who are under court supervision ((658P(3); 658E(c)(3)(B))?
☐ No
☒ Yes, and the upper age is [18](#) (may not equal or exceed age 19).
- d. How does the Lead Agency define the following eligibility terms?

- i. “residing with”: A minor who physically dwells with his or her parents or legal guardian as defined in Regulation 8687, Art. 1.4 No. 39
- ii. “in loco parentis”: Adult responsible for a minor who is assigned by the Court or the Department of the Family and who is responsible for attending the minor’s activities and needs.

3.1.2 Eligibility criteria: Reason for care

- a. How does the Lead Agency define the following terms for the purposes of determining CCDF eligibility?
 - i. Define what is accepted as “Working” (including activities and any hour requirements):
An activity that is carried out in exchange of a compensation. It must be verifiable and paid as established by the Department of Labor’s state and federal laws. The program considers such employment as an allowable activity when is part time with a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week or full-time employment. Such employment may be self-employed or on salary basis. This last one consists of being hired by an employer which pays for the time worked. On the other hand, self-employment is when the person has his/her own business registered under state law and earn a profit that includes his /her salaries.
 - ii. Define what is accepted as “Job training” (including activities and any hour requirements):
Activity that consist of any educational, vocational, or occupational courses aimed at acquiring greater knowledge to develop the skills necessary to obtain an employment. This training must be verifiable and certified by an Educational Institution approved under state laws. The activity must be performed for a minimum of twenty (20) hours per week.
 - iii. Define what is accepted as “Education” (including activities and any hour requirements):
Education is an activity in which a parent or caregiver participate in a program aimed at developing the necessary knowledge and skills to obtain and retain employment. Such program may be either in the classroom modality or by online courses. It must consist of at least a minimal enrollment of twelve (12) credits and offered by an institution accredited by the Puerto Rico’s Higher Education Council. Also, it refers to the participation in noncredit courses where at least consist of twelve (12) hours per week activities such as internships, practicums, and laboratories. This includes undergraduate students enrolled in graduate master’s or doctoral courses with an academic workload of six (6) hours per week. This activity may include GED Program for teen parents or adults.
 - iv. Define what is accepted as “Attending” (a job training or educational program) (e.g. travel time, hours required for associated activities such as study groups, lab experiences, time for outside class study or completion of homework): The term “attending” consist of a person’s participation in a activity related to studies or training and can be validated by a school or education institution. This may include special education projects, internships, supervised practice, laboratory participation, thesis study time, commute time and other activities.
- b. Does the Lead Agency allow parents to qualify for CCDF assistance on the basis of education and training without additional work requirements?
 - ☒ Yes
 - ☐ No. If no, describe the additional work requirements. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- c. Does the Lead Agency provide child care to children who receive, or need to receive protective services?
 - ☐ No
 - ☒ Yes. If yes:
 - i. Provide the Lead Agency’s definition of “protective services”: Children who are at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation. They are under the custody of the State, represented by the Department of the Family and who are placed in licensed homes or a kinship resource.

Note: Federal requirements allow other vulnerable children identified by the Lead Agency not formally in child protection to be included in the Lead Agency's definition of protective services for CCDF purposes. A Lead Agency may elect to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care when foster care parents are *not* working or are *not* in education/training activities, but this provision should be included in the protective services definition above.

- ii. Are children in foster care considered to be in protective services for the purposes of eligibility at determination?
 - ☐ No
 - ☒ Yes
- iii. Does the Lead Agency waive the income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis (98.20 (a)(3)(ii)(A))?
 - ☐ No
 - ☒ Yes
- iv. Does the Lead Agency waive the eligible activity (e.g., work, job training, education, etc.) requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services on a case-by-case basis?
 - ☐ No
 - ☒ Yes
- v. Does the Lead Agency provide respite care to custodial parents of children in protective services?
 - ☐ No
 - ☒ Yes

3.1.3 Eligibility criteria: Family Income Limits

Note: The questions in 3.1.3 relate to initial determination. Redetermination is addressed in 3.1.8 and 3.2.5.

- a. How does the Lead Agency define "income" for the purposes of eligibility at the point of initial determination? *Income is defined as the salaries earned because of employment of the parents or caregiver and/or their respective spouses. Such family income may not exceed eighty-five percent (85%) of a Puerto Rico median family for a family unit of equal size. In the case of self-employment the annual income is evaluated to calculated the monthly income average and it is used for eligibility evaluation purposes. The income considered for the determination of eligibility will be the net income generated because of the employment of parents or caretaker and their spouses, except in cases where there are marital capitulations agreements, mandatory deductions form the gross salary shall not be considered as income. Elective deductions from gross salary and the mandatory deductions. In the case of persons whose source of income is self-employment, filed income tax returns shall be required, from which the taxable net income will be identified. During the declaration of an emergency issued by the Governor because of the COVID19 Pandemic , income earned by employees such as first responders and essential workers will not be taken into consideration. This will only apply if emergency CARES, CRRSA and ARPA funds are made available.*
- b. Provide the CCDF income eligibility limits in the table below **at the time of initial determination**. Complete columns (i) and (ii) based on maximum eligibility at initial entry into

CCDF. Complete columns (iii) and (iv) *only if* the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85 percent of the current state median income (SMI) at the initial eligibility determination point. If the income eligibility limits are not statewide, please complete the chart below using the most populous area of the state or territory (defined as the area serving highest number of CCDF children) and respond to c. below the table.

	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)
Family Size	100% of SMI (\$/Month)	85% of SMI (\$/Month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	(IF APPLICABLE) (\$/Month) Maximum Initial or First Tier Income Limit (or Threshold) if Lower than 85% of Current SMI	(IF APPLICABLE) (% of SMI) [Divide (iii) by (i), multiply by 100] Income Level if Lower than 85% of Current SMI
1	1,381.50	1,174.28	N/A	N/A
2	1,806.59	1,535.60	N/A	N/A
3	2,231.67	1,896.92	N/A	N/A
4	2,656.75	2,258.24	N/A	N/A
5	3,081.83	2,619.56	N/A	N/A

- c. If the income eligibility limits are not statewide, describe how many jurisdictions set their own income eligibility limits and provide the income limit ranges across the jurisdictions (e.g. range from [lowest limit] to [highest limit])(98.16(i)(3)). [n/a](#)

SMI source and year. [HHS Federal Poverty Guidelines for 2021](#)

Reminder: Income limits must be established and reported in terms of current SMI based on the most recent data published by the Bureau of the Census (98.20(a)(2)(i)) even if the federal poverty level is used in implementing the program. SMI guidelines are available at: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines>

- d. Identify the most populous area of the state (defined as the area serving the highest number of CCDF children) used to complete the chart in 3.1.3 b. [The most populated areas are: San Juan \(metropolitan area\), Ponce and Mayaguez](#)
- e. What is the effective date for these eligibility limits reported in 3.1.3 b?
[October 1, 2021](#)
- f. Provide the citation or link, if available, for the income eligibility limits.
www.acuden.pr.gov

3.1.4 Lead Agencies are required to ensure that children receiving CCDF funds do not have family assets that exceed \$1,000,000, as certified by a family member (98.20(a)(2)(ii)).

- a. Describe how the family member certifies that family assets do not exceed \$1,000,000 (e.g., a checkoff on the CCDF application). [When parents are filling out the application for the services, they must complete a statement indicating that their assets exceed \\$1,000,000. The application is then](#)

certified by them that the information included is correct and could result in a fraudulent misappropriation of the funds.

- b. Does the Lead Agency waive the asset limit on a case-by-case basis for families defined as receiving, or in need of, protective services?

☐ No

☒ Yes. If yes, describe the policy or procedure and provide citation:
In the moment their income is evaluated to determine eligibility, parents or legal guardians of children who are under state protection and are assigned by the Court or the Department of Family are exempt from their income and assets. This is established in Regulation 8687, Art 2.1

- 3.1.5 Describe any additional eligibility conditions or rules, which are applied by the Lead Agency (98.20(b)) during:

- a. eligibility determination. During a declaration of emergency issued by the Governor in response to the COVID Pandemic, first responders and essential employees will be exempt from income screening for eligibility to receive care services. This special condition only applies if CARES, CRRSA and ARPA funds are available to pay for such care services.
- b. eligibility redetermination. If the declaration of an emergency issued by the Governor in response to the COVID Pandemic is maintained, first responders and essential employees will be exempt for the assessment eligibility of their income to receive care services. This special condition only applies if CARES, CRRSA and ARPA funds are available to pay for such care services.

- 3.1.6 Lead Agencies are required to take into consideration children's development and promote continuity of care when authorizing child care services (98.21(f); 98.16(h)(6)). Lead Agencies are reminded that authorized child care services are not required to be strictly based on the work, training, or education schedule of the parent (98.21 (g)). Check the approaches, if applicable, that the Lead Agency uses when considering children's development and promoting continuity of care when authorizing child care services.

- ☒ a. Coordinating with Head Start, Prekindergarten, other early learning programs, or school-age programs to create a package of arrangements that accommodates parents' work schedules
- ☒ b. Inquiring about whether the child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP)
- ☐ c. Establishing minimum eligibility periods longer than 12 months
- ☒ d. Using cross-enrollment or referrals to other public benefits
- ☒ e. Working with IDEA Part B, Section 619 and Part C staff to explore how services included in a child's IEP or IFSP can be supported and/or provided onsite and in collaboration with child care services
- ☒ f. Working with entities that may provide other child support services.
- ☐ g. Providing more intensive case management for families with children with multiple risk factors
- ☒ h. Implementing policies and procedures that promote universal design to ensure that activities and environments are accessible to all children, including children with sensory, physical, or other disabilities

- ☐ i. Other. Describe: N/A

3.1.7 Fluctuation in earnings.

Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate how their processes for initial determination and redetermination take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings (658E(c)(2)(N)(i)(II) and 98.21(c)). The Lead Agency must put in place policies that ensure that temporary increases in income, including temporary increases that can result in a monthly income exceeding 85 percent of state median income (SMI) (calculated on a monthly basis) from seasonal employment or other temporary work schedules, do not affect eligibility or family co-payments (98.21(c)). Check the processes that the Lead Agency uses to take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings.

- ☐ a. Average the family's earnings over a period of time (e.g. 12 months).
- ☐ b. Request earning statements that are most representative of the family's monthly income.
- ☐ c. Deduct temporary or irregular increases in wages from the family's standard income level.
- ☒ d. Other. Describe: In case of self-employment where income is not stale, the annual income is evaluated to calculate the monthly income average and it is used for eligibility evaluation purposes . In cases where the person is a salaried employee but does have various increases in income form productivity bonuses, tips, overtime work, etc. those shall not be included when determining the respond to a permanent salary increase will be considered for evaluation.

3.1.8 Lead Agencies are required to have procedures for documenting and verifying that children receiving CCDF funds meet eligibility criteria at the time of eligibility determination and redetermination (98.68(c)). Lead Agencies should note that there are no federal requirements for specific documentation or verification procedures. Check the information that the Lead Agency documents and verifies at initial determination and redetermination and describe, at a minimum, what information is required and how often. Check all that apply.

Required at Initial Determination	Required at Redetermination	Information and Description
x		a. Applicant identity. Describe: Photo ID such as a Driver's license, Real ID, Passport, etc.
x		b. Applicant's relationship to the child. Describe: Birth certificate or legal document establishing custody.
x		c. Child's information for determining eligibility (e.g., identity, age, citizen/immigration status). Describe: Birth certificate or legal document establishing immigration status.
x	x	d. Work. Describe: In case of being a salaried employee, a stub or official certification from the company where he/she works that indicates the information is required . In case of self-employment, a copy of the income tax returns is

		requested and if the business is new, less than one year old, a copy of the patent and affidavit establishing the income is requested
x	x	e. Job training or educational program. Describe: a copy of an official students class schedule certified by the institution, or request of an official student certification stamped by the educational institution.
x	x	f. Family income. Describe: Check stub, a signed income certification by the employer or an income tax return in case of self-employment
x	x	g. Household composition. Describe: Birth Certificates
x	x	h. Applicant residence. Describe: Evidence of any utility bills such as: electricity, water, residential telephone. In case of not having these, will provide an affidavit validating the place of their residence.
x	x	i. Other. Describe: vaccination certificate

3.1.9 Which strategies, if any, will the Lead Agency use to ensure the timeliness of eligibility determinations upon receipt of applications? Check all that apply.

- ☒ a. Time limit for making eligibility determinations. Describe length of time: Applications are processed the order that they are received. Applications are attended within the first 30 days if the applicant completes all documentations required. If the applicant does not have all the documents, a follow up appointment will be scheduled according to their availability without affecting their employment or study activities.
- ☒ b. Track and monitor the eligibility determination process
- ☒ c. Other. Describe: The CIMA electronic case management system, maintains application history and record, indicates the assignment of an eligibility technician that will be working on the case, and the application status. This information is monitored by the supervisor who is responsible for maintaining compliance with the terms, as the system sends alerts to the supervisor to follow up employees and will not permit the evaluation and determination of eligibility application exceed 60 days.
- ☐ d. None

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

Lead Agencies are required 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 younger than age 6 (98.16(v); 98.33(f)).

Lead Agencies must coordinate with TANF programs to ensure 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/territory 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.

- a. Identify the TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions:
[Socioeconomic Development of the Family Administration](#)
- b. Provide the following definitions established by the TANF agency:
 - i. “Appropriate child care”: [The regulations that govern the TANF Program do not specifically define what is appropriate care, although in Puerto Rico this service is regulated by Law 173, which regulates the quality and safety in homes and care centers.](#)
 - ii. “Reasonable distance”: [The Program State Regulations do not stipulate this definition](#)
 - iii. “Unsuitability of informal child care”: [The Program State Regulations do not stipulate this definition](#)
 - iv. “Affordable child care arrangements”: [The Program State Regulations do not stipulate this definition](#)
- c. How are parents who receive TANF benefits informed about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the TANF work requirements?
 - ☒ i. In writing
 - ☒ ii. Verbally
 - ☐ iii. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- d. Provide the citation for the TANF policy or procedure: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

3.2 Family Contribution to Payments

Lead Agencies are required to establish and periodically revise a sliding-fee scale for CCDF families that varies based on income and the size of the family to determine each family’s contribution (i.e., co-payment) that is not a barrier to families receiving CCDF funds (658E(c)(5)). In addition to income and the size of the family, the Lead Agency may use other factors when determining family contributions/co-payments. Lead Agencies, however, may NOT use cost of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining co-payments (98.45(k)(2)). Questions 3.2.1 through 3.2.4 address co-payments during the initial/entry-eligibility period.

To help families transition off child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust co-pay amounts for families determined to be eligible under a graduated phase-out. Question 3.2.5 addresses co-payments during the graduated phase-out period.

- 3.2.1 Provide the CCDF co-payments in the chart below according to family size for **one** child in care.
 - a. Complete the chart based on the most populous area of the state or territory (defined as the area serving the highest number of CCDF children, aligned to the response provided in 3.1.3 e).

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
Family size	Lowest initial or First Tier Income Level where family is first charged co-pay (greater than \$0)	What is the monthly co-payment for a family of this size based on the income level in (a)?	What percentage of income is this co-payment in (b)?	Highest initial or First Tier Income Level before a family is no longer eligible.	What is the monthly co-payment for a family of this size based on the income level in (d)?	What percentage of income is this co-payment in (d)?
1	690.76	\$73.85	10.69%	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	903.30	\$55.39	6.13%	N/A	N/A	N/A
3	1,115.84	\$55.39	4.96%	N/A	N/A	N/A
4	1,328.38	\$55.39	4.17%	N/A	N/A	N/A
5	1,540.92	\$55.39	3.59%	N/A	N/A	N/A

- b. If the sliding-fee scale is not statewide (i.e., county-administered states):
- ☒ N/A. Sliding fee scale is statewide
 - Identify the most populous area of the state (defined as the area serving the highest number of CCDF children) used to complete the chart above.
[San Juan \(metropolitan area\), Ponce, Mayaguez](#)
 - Describe how many jurisdictions set their own sliding-fee scale (98.16(i)(3)).
[N/A](#)
- c. What is the effective date of the sliding-fee scale(s)? [October 1, 2019](#)
- d. Provide the link(s) to the sliding-fee scale: www.acuden.pr.gov

3.2.2 How will the family's contribution be calculated, and to whom will it be applied? Check all that apply under a. or b.

- ☒ a. The fee is a dollar amount and (check all that apply):
- ☐ i. The fee is per child, with the same fee for each child.
 - ☒ ii. The fee is per child and is discounted for two or more children.
 - ☐ iii. The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.
 - ☒ iv. No additional fee is charged after a certain number of children.
 - ☐ v. The fee is per family.
 - ☐ vi. The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ vii. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ b. The fee is a percent of income and (check all that apply):

- ☐ i. The fee is per child, with the same percentage applied for each child.
- ☐ ii. The fee is per child, and a discounted percentage is applied for two or more children.
- ☐ iii. The fee is per child up to a maximum per family.
- ☐ iv. No additional percentage is charged after a certain number of children.
- ☐ v. The fee is per family.
- ☐ vi. The contribution schedule varies because it is set locally/regionally (as indicated in 1.2.1). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ vii. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

3.2.3 Does the Lead Agency use other factors in addition to income and family size to determine each family's co-payment (658E(c)(3)(B))? Reminder: Lead Agencies may NOT use cost of care or amount of subsidy payment in determining co-payments (98.45(k)(2)).

- ☐ No
- ☒ Yes. If yes, check and describe those additional factors below.
 - ☒ a. Number of hours the child is in care. Describe: [If a child receives care services on a part-time basis, less than 6 hours per day, the payment for this service is adjusted in comparison to the full time payment rate, which in turn will adjust and reduce the co-payment.](#)
 - ☐ b. Lower co-payments for a higher quality of care, as defined by the state/territory. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ c. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

3.2.4 The Lead Agency may waive contributions/co-payments from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size (98.45(k)) or for families who are receiving or needing to receive protective services, on a case-by-case basis, as determined for purposes of CCDF eligibility, or who meet other criteria established by the Lead Agency (98.45(k)(4)). Does the Lead Agency waive family contributions/co-payments for any of the following? Check all that apply.

- ☐ No, the Lead Agency does not waive family contributions/co-payments.
- ☒ Yes, the Lead Agency waives family contributions/co-payments. If yes, identify and describe which families have their family contributions/co-payments waived.
 - ☐ a. Families with an income at or below the Federal poverty level for families of the same size. Describe the policy and provide the policy citation. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☒ b. Families who are receiving or needing to receive protective services on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the Lead Agency for purposes of CCDF eligibility. Describe the policy and provide the policy citation. [When evaluating eligibility of families identified as state protection, their income is not considered because it is zero and qualifies them below 50% of the State's median income according to the poverty index and therefore, they have no co-payments assigned to them.](#)

- ☒ c. Families meeting other criteria established by the Lead Agency. Describe the policy. Regulation 8687, Art 2.11 and the Eligibility Manual, chapter XIII, establish that families that are evaluated and show less than 50% of the State Median Income will be assigned no co-payment. In the event of an emergency or a declaration of disaster by the Governor of Puerto Rico, the Agency Administrator (ACUDEN) may request a waiver from the federal government to exempt participating families who are in affected areas from the co-payment for a period not to exceed 180 days prior of the declaration. If an extension is required, it must be because in response to the continuation of the emergency and the effects it will have on families.

3.2.5 Policies and processes for graduated phase-out of assistance at redetermination.

Lead Agencies that establish initial family income eligibility below 85 percent of state median income (SMI) are required to provide a graduated phase-out of assistance for families whose income has increased above the state's initial income threshold at the time of redetermination but remains below the federal threshold of 85 percent of the state median income (98.21(b)(1)). Providing a graduated phase-out promotes continuity by allowing for wage growth, allows for a tapered transition out of the child care subsidy program as income increases, and supports long-term self-sufficiency for families.

Lead Agencies that provide a graduated phase-out must implement a two-tiered eligibility threshold, with the second tier of eligibility (used at the time of eligibility redetermination) to be set at:

- (i) 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size.
- (ii) An amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold that:
 - (A) Takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family.
 - (B) Provides justification that the second eligibility threshold is:
 - (1) Sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability.
 - (2) Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption.

At redetermination, a child shall be considered eligible if his or her parents are working or attending a job training or educational program even if their income exceeds the Lead Agency's income limit to initially qualify for assistance as long as their income does not exceed the second tier of eligibility (98.21(a); 98.21(b)(1)). Note that once deemed eligible, the family shall be considered eligible for a full minimum 12-month eligibility period, even if their income exceeds the second tier of eligibility during the eligibility period, as long as it does not exceed 85 percent of SMI.

A family eligible for services via the graduated phase-out of assistance is considered eligible under the same conditions as other eligible families with the exception of the co-payment restrictions, which do not apply to a graduated phase-out. To help families transition from child care assistance, Lead Agencies may gradually adjust co-pay amounts for families whose children are determined eligible under a graduated phase-out and may require additional reporting on changes in family income. However, Lead Agencies must still ensure that any additional reporting requirements do not constitute an undue burden on families.

- a. Check and describe the option that best identifies the Lead Agency's policies and procedures regarding the graduated phase-out of assistance.
 - ☒ The Lead Agency sets its initial eligibility threshold at 85 percent of SMI and therefore, is not required to provide a graduated phase-out period. (If checked, skip to subsection 3.3)
 - ☐ The Lead Agency sets the second tier of eligibility at 85 percent of SMI.
 - A. Describe the policies and procedures. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - B. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ The Lead Agency sets the second tier of eligibility at an amount lower than 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size but above the Lead Agency's initial eligibility threshold.
 - A. Provide the income level for the second tier of eligibility for a family of three: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - B. Describe how the second eligibility threshold:
 1. Takes into account the typical household budget of a low-income family: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 2. Is sufficient to accommodate increases in family income over time that are typical for low-income workers and that promote and support family economic stability: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 3. Reasonably allows a family to continue accessing child care services without unnecessary disruption: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 4. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure related to the second eligibility threshold: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- b. To help families transition from assistance, does the Lead Agency gradually adjust co-payments for families eligible under the graduated phase-out period?
 - ☒ No
 - ☐ Yes
 - i. If yes, describe how the Lead Agency gradually adjusts co-payments for families under a graduated phase-out: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ii. If yes, does the Lead Agency require additional reporting requirements during the graduated phase-out period? (Note: Additional reporting requirements are also discussed in section 3.4.3 of the Plan.)
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Yes. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

3.3 Increasing Access for Vulnerable Children and Families

Lead Agencies are required to give priority for child care assistance to children with special needs, which can include vulnerable populations, in families with very low incomes, and to children experiencing homelessness (658E(c)(3)(B); 98.46(a)). The prioritization of CCDF assistance services is not limited to eligibility determination. Other ways to give priority may include the establishment of a waiting list or the ranking of eligible families in priority order to be served.

Note: CCDF defines “child experiencing homelessness” as a child who is homeless, as defined in Section 725 of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a) (98.2).

3.3.1 Describe how the Lead Agency defines:

- a. “Children with special needs”: They are children between 0 to 18 years and 11 months of age who are diagnosed with a physical, mental, or sensory impairment that substantially limits one or more of their essential daily living activities. In the event of a declaration of an emergency or disaster, such as the COVID 19 Pandemic, childcare services can be provided to children who are unable to care for themselves because their parents must work or study, and the children must participate in distance (remote) education. This condition will be used only upon the availability of special emergency funds such as CARES, CSSRA and ARPA.
- b. “Families with very low incomes”: They are families with incomes that are equal or less than 50% of the State Median Income when compared to families of the same size

3.3.2 Identify how the Lead Agency will prioritize or target child care services for the following children and families:

Note: If waiving co-payments is checked, Lead Agencies will need to provide further information in question 3.2.4. Paying higher rates for accessing higher quality care is addressed in 4.3.3 and using grants or contracts to reserve spots is addressed in 4.1.6.

- a. Complete the table below to indicate how the identified populations are prioritized or targeted.

Population Prioritized	Prioritize for enrollment in child care services	Serve without placing on waiting list	Waive co-payments (on a case-by-case basis). As described in 3.2.4.	Pay higher rate for access to higher quality care	Using grants or contracts to reserve spots
Children with special needs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Families with very low incomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Children experiencing homelessness, as defined by the CCDF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Families receiving TANF, those attempting to transition off TANF, and those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF (98.16(i)(4))	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- b. If applicable, identify and describe any other ways the identified populations in the table above are prioritized or targeted. N/A

3.3.3 List and define any other priority groups established by the Lead Agency.
[Area given priority with the enrollment process and are exempted from the co-payment.](#)

3.3.4 Describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes services for the additional priority groups identified in 3.3.3. [In the case of vaccinations, the person is referred to the Department of Health to obtain evidence of the child's vaccination and is served according with the established Interagency Agreement.](#)

3.3.5 Lead Agencies are required to expend CCDF funds to (1) permit the enrollment (after an initial eligibility determination) of children experiencing homelessness while required documentation is obtained, (2) provide training and technical assistance to child care providers and the appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving children and families experiencing homelessness (addressed in section 6), and (3) conduct specific outreach to families experiencing homelessness(658E(c)(3); 98.51).

- a. Describe the procedures to permit the enrollment of children experiencing homelessness while required documentation is obtained. [When a person certifies that they are experiencing homelessness, the Lead Agency provides 30 days to obtain the necessary documents to determine eligibility. Also children experiencing homelessness have priority for services, they are not placed in the waiting list and their copayments are waived. During a declaration of emergency and/or disaster, and at the discretion of ACUDEN, a period of up to 180 days may be allowed for the family to obtain documents to determine eligibility. In such case, the family will be asked to provide certification documenting that the homelessness is related to or as a consequence of the emergency.](#)
- b. Check, where applicable, the procedures used to conduct outreach for children experiencing homelessness (as defined by CCDF Rule) and their families.
 - ☒ i. Lead Agency accepts applications at local community-based locations
 - ☐ ii. Partnerships with community-based organizations
 - ☒ iii. Partnering with homeless service providers, McKinney-Vento liaisons, and others who work with families experiencing homelessness to provide referrals to child care
 - ☐ iv. Other: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Note: The Lead Agency shall pay any amount owed to a child care provider for services provided as a result of the initial eligibility determination, and any CCDF payment made prior to the final eligibility determination shall not be considered an error or improper payment (98.51(a)(1)(ii)).

3.3.6 Lead Agencies must establish a grace period that allows children experiencing homelessness and children in foster care to receive CCDF assistance while providing their families with a reasonable time to take any necessary actions to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements (as described in section 5). The length of such a grace period shall be established in consultation with the state, territorial, or tribal health agency (658E(c)(2)(I)(i)(I); 98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)).

Note: Any payment for such a child during the grace period shall not be considered an error or improper payment (98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)(2)).

- a. Describe procedures to provide a grace period to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements, including how the length of the grace period was established in consultation with the state, territorial, or tribal health agency for:
 - i. Children experiencing homelessness (as defined by the CCDF Final Rule). [Children whose families are classified as experiencing homelessness have a 30-day period to obtain documents to determine eligibility. Interagency agreements are established that will give priority to](#)

these families for them to expedite the processing of these documents. If any agency is unable to issue the document, such as vaccines, the family will provide evidence of the process and the deadline can be extended for another 30 days. . Provide the citation for this policy and procedure.

Regulation 8687, Art. 1.8 (28)

- ii. Children who are in foster care. These are children who are at risk of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. These children are under the State custody, represented by the Department of the Family, and placed in licensed homes or with a Family Resource. These children have a 30 days grace period to obtain de vaccination documents as agreed with the Department of Health. Provide the citation for this policy and procedure. Regulation 8687, Art. 1.8 (40)
- b. Describe how the Lead Agency coordinates with licensing agencies and other relevant state, territorial, tribal, and local agencies to provide referrals and support to help families with children receiving services during a grace period comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements (98.41(a)(1)(i)(C)(4)). Interagency agreements have been established so that families who need care, but require documentation for eligibility determination, are given priority and the paperwork is processed in a more expedited manner. Examples of these agreements are with *Avanzando Juntos* (Early Intervention) and with the Department of Health, Immunization Division.
- c. Does the Lead Agency establish grace periods for other children who are not experiencing homelessness or in foster care?
 - ☐ No
 - ☒ Yes. Describe: Only in the event of a disaster or emergency declaration as deemed necessary and established by the ACUDEN Administrator

3.4 Continuity for Working Families

3.4.1 Minimum 12-month eligibility.

The Lead Agency is required to establish a minimum 12-month eligibility and redetermination period:

- regardless of changes in income. Lead Agencies may not terminate CCDF assistance during the minimum 12-month period if a family has an increase in income that exceeds the state's income eligibility threshold but not the federal threshold of 85 percent of state median income (SMI).
- regardless of temporary changes in participation in work, training, or educational activities (658E(c)(2)(N)(i) and (ii)).

The Lead Agency may not terminate assistance prior to the end of the minimum 12-month period if a family experiences a temporary job loss or a temporary change in participation in a training or educational activity. Any temporary change cannot have a time limit (e.g. 60 days, 90 days, etc.). A temporary change in eligible activity includes, at a minimum:

1. any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness
2. any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working
3. any student holiday or break for a parent participating in a training or educational program
4. any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working

or attending a training or educational program

5. any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program that does not exceed 3 months or a longer period of time established by the Lead Agency
 6. a child turning 13 years old during the minimum 12-month eligibility period (except as described in 3.1.1)
 7. any changes in residency within the state, territory, or tribal service area
- a. Describe the Lead Agency's policies and procedures related to providing a minimum 12-month eligibility period at initial eligibility determination and redetermination and provide a citation for these policies or procedures. During the initial evaluation process of the childcare services application, the family must meet the established eligibility criteria's, such as income, employment, or study activity. The activity is then evaluated so that it meets at least 20 hours per week. The family is evaluated and verified so not to exceed 85% of the state median income to be considered eligible. If it is determined that the family meets these criteria, childcare service is granted for 12 consecutive months. Before the 12th month ends, the family will undergo an activity and income review process to reevaluate eligibility. If family is no longer engaged in qualifying activity, they are granted an additional 3-month period for job search or engage in another qualifying activity. In those cases where there is income instability, the income is evaluated to determine eligibility considering the averaged amount of income over the past six months. If the person has lost their job, they are granted a three-month transition period to search for a job. If a job is found, they will be evaluated according to the established criterion for continued service. If the person does not comply with the requirements for employment after the three-month transition period, the care service will be terminated. This is established in Regulation 8687, Chapter This is established in Regulation 8687, Chapter 2. In the event of a declaration of emergency or disaster, ACUDEN, through the Administrator, may extend the reevaluation period of the families for up to 180 days, ensuring that the emergency and the inability to evaluate the cases does not affect the continuity of the services provided to the families.
- b. Describe and provide the citation for each of the minimum required elements listed below that are included in the Lead Agency's definition of "temporary change".

Minimum Required Element	Citation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. Any time-limited absence from work for an employed parent due to such reasons as the need to care for a family member or an illness. Describe or define your Lead Agency's policy: Evidence of interruption of employment due to illness is requested and an additional three months of service is granted as a transitional period to allow the person to re-establish employment, or if it is determined that the situation is permanent and therefore termination will proceed.	Click or tap here to enter text.
<input type="checkbox"/> ii. Any interruption in work for a seasonal worker who is not working. Describe or define your Lead Agency's policy: Evidence of temporary interruption is requested from the employer, and the last six months of income is evaluated to determine whether it meets at least 85% of the median income for redetermination of eligibility.	Click or tap here to enter text.
<input type="checkbox"/> iii. Any student holiday or break for a parent participating in a training or educational program. Describe or define your Lead Agency's policy: Students will not be considered time off for holidays or between semester breaks of study granted by the	Click or tap here to enter text.

Minimum Required Element	Citation
educational institution. Therefore, their eligibility will not be affected. If necessary, a three-month transition period is granted until the student submits the new registration to the institution that evidences that he/she complies with the required hours of study or credits.	
<input type="checkbox"/> iv. Any reduction in work, training, or education hours, as long as the parent is still working or attending a training or educational program. Describe or define your Lead Agency's policy: A reduction in work or other eligible activity is considered temporary as long as the adult remains employed or engaged in the activity and is expected to resume the activity. Therefore, their eligibility will not be affected	Click or tap here to enter text.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> v. Any other cessation of work or attendance at a training or educational program that does not exceed 3 months or a longer period of time established by the Lead Agency. Describe or define your Lead Agency's policy: Any other situation that may affect the compliance with activity requirements, will result in granting a transitional three-month period for the completion of the service.	Click or tap here to enter text.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vi. A child turning 13 years old during the minimum 12-month eligibility period (except as described in 3.1.1). Describe or define your Lead Agency's policy: The eligibility determination will last until the child is 12 years old. Parents are oriented about this policy and their responsibility to assume any cost for child care services for the child when is 13, except special needs children who may receive CCDF services until turn 18 years old.	Click or tap here to enter text.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vii. Any changes in residency within the state, territory, or tribal service area. Describe or define your Lead Agency's policy: If there would to be a change in residency within the municipalities of PR, the case would be transferred to another Child Care regional office without interrupting the service, and if deemed necessary the adjustment in the information and services. An example of this adjustment could be the provider information. The participant is notified of the change by written notice.	Click or tap here to enter text.

- c. Provide any other elements included in the state's definition of "temporary change", including those implemented during the pandemic, and provide the citation. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

3.4.2 Continuing assistance for “job search” and a Lead Agency’s option to discontinue assistance during the minimum 12-month eligibility period.

Lead Agencies have the option, but are not required, to discontinue assistance during the minimum 12-month eligibility period due to a parent’s non-temporary loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program, otherwise known as a parent’s eligible activity.

If the Lead Agency chooses the option to discontinue assistance due to a parent’s non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity, it must continue assistance at least at the same level for a period of not fewer than 3 months after each such loss or cessation. This time period allows the parent to engage in a job search and to resume work or resume attendance in a job training or educational program. At the end of the minimum 3-month period of continued assistance, if the parent has engaged in a qualifying work, training, or educational program activity with an income below 85 percent of state median income (SMI), assistance cannot be terminated, and the child must continue receiving assistance until the next scheduled redetermination or, at the Lead Agency option, for an additional minimum 12-month eligibility period.

- a. Does the Lead Agency consider seeking employment (engaging in a job search) an eligible activity at initial eligibility determination (at application) and at the minimum 12-month eligibility redetermination? (Note: If yes, Lead Agencies must provide a minimum of three months of job search.)
 - ☐ No
 - ☒ Yes. If yes, describe the policy or procedure (including any differences in eligibility at initial eligibility determination vs. redetermination of eligibility):
If at redetermination, there is a change in employment activity the parent is given 3 months for job search.
- b. Does the Lead Agency discontinue assistance during the minimum 12-month eligibility period due to a parent’s non-temporary loss or cessation of eligible activity and offer a minimum 3-month period to allow parents to engage in a job search and to resume participation in an eligible activity?
 - ☐ No, the state/territory does not discontinue assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent’s *non-temporary* loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program.
 - ☒ Yes, the Lead Agency discontinues assistance during the 12-month eligibility period due to a parent’s *non-temporary* loss of work or cessation of eligible activity and provides a minimum 3-month period of job search. If yes:
 - i. Provide a summary describing the Lead Agency’s policies and procedures for discontinuing assistance due to a parent’s non-temporary change: Our Lead Agency’s policies and procedures for discontinuing assistance due to a parent’s non-temporary change establishes that: In case the parent reports to us the loss of permanent employment and that they are not interested in the service, the service will be discontinued within the 12-month period.
 - ii. Describe what specific actions/changes trigger the job-search period after each such loss or cessation: The job search period is considered when the parent notifies during the case review at the end of the 12 months of eligibility, that he/she has lost their job, this is called the Transition Period. At this time the parent is offered three months to look for a job and if he/she does not find a job, the

childcare service will be discontinued, and is advised that he/she can reapply when they participate in any eligible activities and meets with all other established criterions.

- iii. How long is the job-search period (must be at least 3 months)?
[Three months](#)
- iv. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure. [Regulation 8687, Art 1.8](#)
- c. The Lead Agency may discontinue assistance prior to the next minimum 12-month redetermination in the following limited circumstances. Check and describe any circumstances in which the Lead Agency chooses to discontinue assistance prior to the next minimum 12-month redetermination. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ i. Not applicable
 - ☒ ii. Excessive unexplained absences despite multiple attempts by the Lead Agency or designated entity to contact the family and provider, including the prior notification of a possible discontinuation of assistance.
 - A. Define the number of unexplained absences identified as excessive:
[More than 20% of the total days of service during the month.](#)
- B. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure: [Regulation 8687, Art. 3.1 A.](#)
 - ☒ iii. A change in residency outside of the state, territory, or tribal service area. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure: [Regulation 8687, Art. 3.1 A](#)
 - ☐ iv. Substantiated fraud or intentional program violations that invalidate prior determinations of eligibility. Describe the violations that lead to discontinued assistance and provide the citation for this policy or procedure.
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

3.4.3 Change reporting during the minimum 12-month eligibility period.

The Lead Agency must describe the requirements for parents to report changes in circumstances during the 12-month eligibility period and describe efforts to ensure that such requirements do not place an undue burden on eligible families, which could impact the continuity of care for children and stability for families receiving CCDF services (98.21 (e)).

Note: Responses should exclude reporting requirements for a graduated phase-out, which were described in question 3.2.5 b.

Families are required to report a change to the Lead Agency at any time during the 12-month eligibility period if the family's income exceeds 85 percent of the state median income, taking into account irregular fluctuations in income (98.21(e)(1)). If the Lead Agency chooses the option to terminate assistance, as described in section 3.4.2 of the Plan, they may require families to report a non-temporary change in work, training or educational activities (otherwise known as a parent's eligible activity).

- a. Does the Lead Agency require families to report a non-temporary change in a parent's eligible activity?
 - ☒ No
 - ☐ Yes
- b. Any additional reporting requirements during the minimum 12-month eligibility period must be limited to items that impact a family's eligibility (e.g., income changes over 85 percent of

state median income (SMI)) or that impact the Lead Agency's ability to contact the family or pay the child care providers (e.g., a family's change of address, a change in the parent's choice of child care provider).

Check and describe any additional reporting requirements required by the Lead Agency during the minimum 12-month eligibility period. Check all that apply.

- ☐ i. Additional changes that may impact a family's eligibility during the minimum 12-month period. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☒ ii. Changes that impact the Lead Agency's ability to contact the family. Describe: [The Lead Agency has established that in the case of change of residence or contact information, the parent must report it to the agency to update their record, otherwise the agency may not be able to contact them affecting the service because of non-compliance.](#)
- ☒ iii. Changes that impact the Lead Agency's ability to pay child care providers. Describe: [The Lead Agency has established that in the case of a change in provider the parent must report it to the Lead Agency.](#)
- c. Any additional reporting requirements that the Lead Agency chooses to require from parents during the minimum 12-month eligibility period, shall not require an additional office visit. In addition, the Lead Agency must offer a range of notification options to accommodate families. How does the Lead Agency allow families to report changes to ensure that reporting requirements are not burdensome and to avoid an impact on continued eligibility between redeterminations? Check all that apply.
 - ☒ i. Phone
 - ☒ ii. Email
 - ☐ iii. Online forms
 - ☐ iv. Extended submission hours
 - ☒ v. Postal mail
 - ☐ vi. Fax
 - ☒ vii. In-person submission
 - ☐ viii. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- d. Families must have the option to voluntarily report changes on an ongoing basis during the minimum 12-month eligibility period.

Lead Agencies are required to act on information reported by the family if it will reduce the family's co-payment or increase the family's subsidy. Lead Agencies are prohibited from acting on information reported by the family that would reduce the family's subsidy unless the information reported indicates that the family's income exceeds 85 percent of SMI after considering irregular fluctuations in income or, at the option of the Lead Agency, the family has experienced a non-temporary change in eligible activity.

 - i. Describe any other changes that the Lead Agency allows families to report.
[N/A](#)
 - ii. Provide the citation for this policy or procedure. [Regulation 8687, Chapter 3 Art 3.1](#)

3.4.4 Prevent the disruption of employment, education, or job training activities.

Lead Agencies are required to have procedures and policies in place to ensure that parents (especially parents receiving assistance under the TANF program) are not required to unduly disrupt their employment, education, or job training activities to comply with the Lead Agency's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility for assistance (658E(c)(2)(N)(ii); 98.21(d)).

Examples include developing strategies to inform families and their providers of an upcoming redetermination and the information that will be required of the family, pre-populating subsidy renewal forms, having parents confirm that the information is accurate, and/or asking only for the information necessary to make an eligibility redetermination. In addition, states and territories can offer a variety of family-friendly methods for submitting documentation for eligibility redetermination that considers the range of needs for families in accessing support (e.g., use of languages other than English, access to transportation, accommodation of parents working non-traditional hours).

- a. Identify, where applicable, the Lead Agency's procedures and policies to ensure that parents (especially parents receiving TANF program funds) do not have their employment, education, or job training unduly disrupted to comply with the state/territory's or designated local entity's requirements for the redetermination of eligibility. Check all that apply.
 - ☒ i. Advance notice to parents of pending redetermination
 - ☐ ii. Advance notice to providers of pending redetermination
 - ☒ iii. Pre-populated subsidy renewal form
 - ☐ iv. Online documentation submission
 - ☐ v. Cross-program redeterminations
 - ☐ vi. Extended office hours (evenings and/or weekends)
 - ☒ vii. Consultation available via phone
 - ☒ viii. Other: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4 Ensure Equal Access to Child Care for Low-Income Children

A core purpose of CCDF is to promote parental choice and to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care services that best suit their family's needs. Parents have the option to choose from center-based care, family child care, or care provided in the child's own home. In supporting parental choice, the Lead Agencies must ensure that families receiving CCDF funding have the opportunity to choose from the full range of eligible child care settings and must provide families with equal access to child care that is comparable to that of non-CCDF families. Lead Agencies must employ strategies to increase the supply and to improve the quality of child care services, especially in underserved areas. In addition to generally building the supply of child care for all families, this effort also supports equal access for CCDF eligible children to the priced child care market.

This section addresses strategies that the Lead Agency uses to promote parental choice, ensure equal access, and increase the supply of child care. Note: In responding to questions in this section, the Office of Child Care (OCC) recognizes that each state/territory identifies and defines its own categories and types of care. The OCC does not expect states/territories to change their

definitions to fit the CCDF-defined categories and types of care. For these questions, provide responses that closely match the CCDF categories of care.

Note: When asked for citations, responses can include state statute, regulations, administrative rules, policy manuals or policy issuances. See the Introduction on page 4 for more detail.

4.1 Maximize Parental Choice and Implement Supply Building Mechanisms

The parent(s) of each eligible child who receive(s) or is offered financial assistance for child care services has the option of either receiving a child care certificate or, if available, enrolling their child with a provider that has a grant or contract for providing child care services (658E(c)(2)(A); 98.30(a)). Even if a parent chooses to enroll their child with a provider who has a grant or contract, the parent will select the provider, to the extent practicable. If a parent chooses to use a certificate, the Lead Agency shall provide information to the parent on the range of provider options, including care by sectarian providers and relatives. Lead Agencies must require providers chosen by families to meet health and safety standards and has the option to require higher standards of quality. Lead Agencies are reminded that any policies and procedures should not restrict parental access to any type of care or provider (e.g. center care, home care, in-home care, for-profit provider, non-profit provider, or faith-based provider, etc.) (98.15 (a)(5)).

- 4.1.1 Describe the child care certificate, including when it is issued to parents (before or after the parent has selected a provider) and what information is included on the certificate (98.16 (q)). [The Child Care Eligibility Certificate establishes the agreements between ACUDEN and the parent who receive the childcare benefit. This document contains the name of the parent or caretaker, receiving childcare services as well as the child's name and the unique identification number which is assigned to the child by the Program. The child's identifying information includes the date of birth and the service period, which would always reflect a minimum of 12 months. This document includes the name of the provider the parent has already chosen and identifies the type of provider, for example, if is a licensed center, family home, etc. This certification includes the amount to be paid to the provider for the service and the family's co-payment, if apply. In addition to the basic information, the Certificate of Eligibility includes the parent's responsibilities and the importance of the child's attendance in order to maintain child care services. It also explains the possible reasons that could affect the child's attendance but would not affect the continuation of the care, such as the child's illness, public health problems, natural disasters, among others. The document also provides guidance about the importance of the adult informing ACUDEN of any change that could affect the Certification, such as family relocation, the desire to change the provider, etc. It highlights the importance of complying with the re-determination process when applicable and is responsible for making proper use of the service as established by state and federal laws. The Eligibility Certification is discussed and explained in detail with the parents and signed by both parties, the parent and the ACUDEN eligibility technician. This document will be maintained in their file and copies will be provided to both parent and provider.](#)

- 4.1.2 Identify how the parent is informed that the child care certificate allows the option to choose from a variety of child care categories, such as private, not-for-profit, faith-based providers; centers; FCC homes; or in-home providers (658E(c)(2)(A)(i); 658P(2); 658Q). Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Certificate provides information about the choice of providers
- ☐ b. Certificate provides information about the quality of providers
- ☐ c. Certificate is not linked to a specific provider, so parents can choose any provider

- ☒ d. Consumer education materials are provided on choosing child care
- ☒ e. Referrals provided to child care resource and referral agencies
- ☐ f. Co-located resource and referral staff in eligibility offices
- ☒ g. Verbal communication at the time of the application
- ☒ h. Community outreach, workshops, or other in-person activities
- ☐ i. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4.1.3 A core principle of CCDF is that families receiving CCDF-funded child care should have equal access to child care that is comparable to that of non-CCDF families (658E(c)(4)(A) and 98.45(a)).

- a. Describe how parents have access to the full range of providers eligible to receive CCDF: Parents are encouraged to select high quality and responsive childcare services to be able to maintain their work and school activities, and to make sure that their children are receiving services in a developmentally appropriate and safe environment. Parents can access information about providers through the ACUDEN webpage where can find the providers directory which includes centers locations, category of services, services hours, etc. Also parents are free to select providers in their communities which respond to their needs. When parents apply for services at any of our offices, they are oriented to their free selection of a provider to care for their child. Parents are offered a list of licensed providers available in their community including licensed centers and home care as well as centers that have delegation of funds contract with ACUDEN to ensure equal access, ACUDEN conducts the market rate surveys of licensed community providers, including those located in rural and metropolitan areas, those with fixed and non-traditional schedules, those that serve different age categories, and those that serve children with special needs. The rates paid by ACUDEN to providers are competitive and responsive to the service costs that parents in the communities generally pay, guaranteeing access to the service for CCDF families.
- b. Describe state data on the extent to which eligible child care providers participate in the CCDF system: Any home or licensed center can participate in the CCDF program. . 48% of all licensed providers actively participate in the CCDF program
- c. Identify any barriers to provider participation, including barriers related to payment rates and practices – including for family child care and in-home providers - based on provider feedback and reports to the Lead Agency: The primary barriers reported by providers to participating in CCDF were delays in processing payments and difficulties in obtaining and paying for the FBI criminal background check . Providers expressed concerns about the length period of time to obtain their monthly payments as their offered the services, to address these issues, an upgrade of the CIMA electronic case management system was recently completed, which will facilitate the electronic registration of children's attendance, approvals, and faster processing of electronic payment transactions. Additionally, processes were included to allow providers to electronically communicate with ACUDEN for submitting required documents facilitating the process. Regarding FBI background check, ACUDEN has identified and coordinated CCDF funds for the sponsorship of the cost of background checks, especially those obtained by the FBI. In addition, interagency agreements have been reviewed with the Police Department to facilitate the obtaining of results for providers through referrals from the agency

4.1.4 Certify by describing the Lead Agency's procedures for ensuring that parents have unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds (658E(c)(2)(B); 98.16(t)). [Providers are oriented, and signed an agreement, about the benefits and responsibilities of participating in the CCDF Program. During this orientation, providers are told that parents must have access to their children anytime while their children receiving childcare services. They are cautioned that in the event ACUDEN receives a complaint about parents' access being limited, they could lose participation in the CCDF Program and not be eligible to receive CCDF funds. To monitor this compliance annually, providers receive at least one unannounced visit to verify parent access to their children at all times](#)

4.1.5 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(i)(2)). Will the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

☐ No

☒ Yes. If checked, what limits will the Lead Agency set on the use of in-home care? Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Restricted based on the minimum number of children in the care of the provider to meet the Fair Labor Standards Act (minimum wage) requirements. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☒ b. Restricted based on the provider meeting a minimum age requirement. Describe: [The child's caregiver must be at least 21 years of age.](#)
- ☐ c. Restricted based on the hours of care (i.e., certain number of hours, non-traditional work hours). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ d. Restricted to care by relatives. (A relative provider must be at least 18 years of age based on the definition of eligible child care provider (98.2)). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☒ e. Restricted to care for children with special needs or a medical condition. Describe: [Usually this service is approved when a child has a medical condition or a special need that limits their mobility and is safer for them to remain at home.](#)
- ☐ f. Restricted to in-home providers that meet additional health and safety requirements beyond those required by CCDF. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☒ g. Other. Describe: [In-home care may be utilized in the event of a Declared State of Emergency that affects participation of children in care centers, like the Pandemic that has limited the participation of children in care centers and schools. This provision is intended to support a school-age child participating in virtual studies which requires an adult to supervise and ensure their safety at home](#)

4.1.6 Child care services available through grants or contracts.

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))? Note: Do not check "yes" if every provider is simply required to sign an agreement to be paid in the certificate program.

☐ No. If no, skip to 4.1.7

☐ Yes, in some jurisdictions but not statewide. If yes, describe how many jurisdictions use grants or contracts for child care slots. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☒ Yes, statewide. If yes, describe:

- i. How the Lead Agency ensures that parents who enroll with a provider who has a grant or contract have choices when selecting a provider:

When parents apply for services at any of our offices, they are oriented to their free selection of a provider to care for their child. Parents are offered a list of licensed providers available in their community including licensed centers and home care as well as centers that have delegation of funds contract with ACUDEN so the parent can have all the necessary information to make an informed decision. In addition, information about the centers the parent can select is published on the ACUDEN and Child Care Program's website. In case that the parent chooses to go directly to the contracted provider for information, the Center Director is required within their contractual responsibilities to orient and not obligate the parent to select the center as the provider. This is monitored by the Eligibility Technicians and if the provider does not comply, the provider jeopardizes their contract and could lose CCDF funds.

- ii. The entities that receive contracts (e.g., shared services alliances, CCR&R agencies, FCC networks, community-based agencies, child care providers) and how grants or contracts are promoted by the Lead Agency: [Different entities have contracts with ACUDEN, including community and private non-profit agencies, home care networks, and municipalities. These agencies are advertised through ACUDEN'S website and municipal offices](#)

- iii. How rates for contracted slots are set through grants and contracts and if they are viewed by providers as a vehicle for stabilizing payments.

The rates paid are the ones established according to the Market Rate Survey used in the subsidy program, vouchers, however in contracts, agreements are reached as a vehicle for stabilization to include other cost as for utilities, rent, or others needs required to comply with health, safety and quality standards.

- b. Will the Lead Agency use grants or contracts for direct child care services to increase the supply or quality of specific types of care?

☐ No

☒ Yes. If yes, does the Lead Agency use grants or contracts to increase the supply and/or quality of child care programs serving the populations below? Check all that apply.

<i>Grants or Contracts are used in Child Care Programs that Serve</i>	<i>To increase the supply of care</i>	<i>To increase the quality of care</i>
i. Children with disabilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ii. Infants and toddlers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. School-age children	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. Children needing non-traditional hour care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
v. Children experiencing homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi. Children with diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vii. Children in underserved areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
viii. Children in urban areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ix. Children in rural areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
x. Other populations, please specify <i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4.1.7 Lead Agencies must identify shortages in the supply of high-quality child care providers that meet parents' needs and preferences. List the data sources used to identify any shortages and declines in the supply of care types that meet parents' needs. Also describe the method of tracking progress to support equal access and parental choice (98.16(x)).

- a. In child care centers. *At the time of the request for proposals to contract providers, they are asked to include a needs assessment that justifies, based on the population and community to be served, the need in the community. In addition, through PDBG5 an inventory of licensed childcare centers, Head Start, Early Head Start and Pre-schools of the Department of Education was conducted, showing where they are located vs. the population in those areas, and is used as a reference to establish agreements for contracting services. Needs are reviewed annually, mainly by analyzing the demand for services according to the enrollment and attendance reports that the contracted providers must submit to ACUDEN. Also it is compare with the needs assessment report by PDBG5 to determine progress in the supplies of services at the communities in need. Based on this analysis ACUDEN determined if new contract is needed to provide child care services in specific areas.*
- b. In child care homes. *N/A. It is based on the demand for the service expressed by the parent when selecting their provider.*
- c. Other. *Click or tap here to enter text.*

4.1.8 Lead Agencies are required to develop and implement strategies to increase the supply of and improve the quality of child care services (98.16 (x)). These strategies should address children in underserved areas; infants and toddlers; children with disabilities, as defined by the Lead Agency; and children who receive care during non-traditional hours. Identify what method(s) is (are) used to increase supply and/or to improve quality for the following populations and indicate in the description if a strategy is focused more on building supply or on improving quality.

- a. Children in underserved areas. Check and describe all that apply.
 - ☐ i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe:
In PR 6 out of 10 children live in poverty, this means close to 58% of all children are affected by poverty and the lack of access to appropriate services, that may include child care. Based on this high percent, ACUDEN request proposal to serve those areas where are identify in need of quality

services. ACUDEN contract specific slots for children participant in in Child Care Program to ensure access to services that comply with quality and health and safety standards.

- ☐ ii. Targeted Family Child Care Support such as Family Child Care Networks. Describe: Even though there are not many contracted family childcare networks, they do exist as an alternative to serve in the communities that are in need. These networks are directly supervised by ACUDEN to ensure that they meet health and safety standards and receive technical assistance in areas of child development, health, safety, etc. to deliver the highest quality services.
- ☐ iii. Start-up funding. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ iv. Technical assistance support. Describe: Specialists from the ACUDEN Child Care Program offer technical assistance in different program areas such as health, family eligibility and access to services, the importance of developmental stages and appropriate intervention, etc.
- ☐ v. Recruitment of providers. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ vii. Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, and shared services. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ viii. Accreditation supports. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ ix. Child care health consultation. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ x. Mental health consultation. Describe: Coordination with mental health agencies and services has been provided through emergency and disaster events, as the hurricane and earthquakes. ACUDEN have ensure that children in underserve areas affected by these events received adequate emotional support and to develop emotional skills to deal with the new challenges in their lives.
- ☐ xi. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

b. Infants and toddlers. Check and describe all that apply.

- ☐ i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe: ACUDEN identify geographical areas where services for infants and toddlers are in need in order to request services proposals to contract providers to offer quality services and meet health and safety requirements to serve CCDF children.
- ☐ ii. Family Child Care Networks. Describe: There are not many contracted childcare networks, but they are an alternative to serve infant and toddler. These networks are directly supervised to ensure that they meet health and safety standards and receive technical assistance in areas of child development, health, safety, etc. to deliver the highest quality services
- ☐ iii. Start-up funding. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ iv. Technical assistance support. Describe: Specialists from the Child Care Program offer technical assistance to providers to develop the appropriate knowledge to serve infant and toddlers
- ☐ v. Recruitment of providers. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- ☐ vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ vii. Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, and shared services. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ viii. Accreditation supports. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ ix. Child care health consultation. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ x. Mental health consultation. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ xi. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- c. Children with disabilities. Check and describe all that apply.
- ☒ i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe: [ACUDEN contract specialized provider to ensure appropriate services to the special need populations. These providers must have employees with the trainings and education needed to serve the children](#)
 - ☐ ii. Family Child Care Networks. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ iii. Start-up funding. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ iv. Technical assistance support. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ v. Recruitment of providers. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ vii. Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, and shared services. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ viii. Accreditation supports. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☒ ix. Child care health consultation. Describe: [Coordination of services with the Department of Health. Avanzando Juntos Program, are agreed to serve special need services](#)
 - ☐ x. Mental health consultation. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ xi. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- d. Children who receive care during non-traditional hours. Check and describe all that apply.
- ☒ i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe: [Contract agreements are established with providers to reserve slots to give services on non-traditional hours to families.](#)
 - ☐ ii. Family Child Care Networks. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ iii. Start-up funding. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ iv. Technical assistance support. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☒ v. Recruitment of providers. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- ☐ vii. Support for improving business practices for providers, such as management training, and shared services. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ viii. Accreditation supports. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ ix. Child Care health consultation. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ x. Mental health consultation. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ xi. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

e. Other. Check and describe all that apply.

- ☐ i. Grants and contracts (as discussed in 4.1.6). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ ii. Family Child Care Networks. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ iii. Start-up funding. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ iv. Technical assistance support. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ v. Recruitment of providers. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ vi. Tiered payment rates (as discussed in 4.3.3). Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ vii. Support for improving business practices, such as management training, paid sick leave, and shared services. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ viii. Accreditation supports. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ ix. Child Care health consultation. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ x. Mental health consultation. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ xi. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4.1.9 Lead Agencies must prioritize investments for increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and do not currently have sufficient numbers of such programs (658 E(c)(2)(M); 98.16 (x);98.46(b)).

- a. How does the Lead Agency define areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment? [Puerto Rico has one of the heights poverty rate in US, recent studies show about 58% of children are under poverty level. In order to identify the poverty areas in needs of services, ACUDEN recently conducted the Puerto Rico Early Childhood Needs Assessment Study. This research collected socio-demographic information on children and included an analysis of poverty levels in different geographic areas vs. childcare services. This study included the municipalities and identified the inventories of existing child care centers, Head Start, Early Head Start and Pre-schools of the Department of Education in those areas](#)
- b. Describe how the Lead Agency prioritizes increasing access to high-quality child care and development services for children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and that do not have access to high-quality programs. [The contracting of care services is used as a tool to serve in which providers submit their proposals for serving these areas where ACUDEN then compares the needs of the extreme poverty communities to serve them.](#)

4.2 Assess Market Rates and Analyze the Cost of Child Care

Key principles of the CCDF are to: (1) provide equal access to child care for children receiving child care assistance; and (2) ensure parental choice by offering a full range of child care services. Payment rates that are too low to support equal access undermine these principles. To establish subsidy payment rates that ensure equal access, Lead Agencies collect and analyze data through a number of tools. Lead Agencies have the option to conduct a statistically valid and reliable (1) market rate survey (MRS) reflecting variations in the price to parents of child care services by geographic area, type of provider, and age of child or (2) an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, such as a cost estimation model (658E(c)(4)(B)). A cost estimation model estimates the cost of care by incorporating both data and assumptions to judge what expected costs would be incurred by child care providers and parents under different scenarios. Another approach would be a cost study that collects cost data at the facility or program level to measure the costs (or inputs used) to deliver child care services (CCDF-ACF-PI-2018-01).

Regardless of whether Lead Agencies conduct a market rate survey or an alternative methodology, they are required to analyze the cost of providing child services, known as the narrow cost analysis, that meet basic health, safety, quality and staffing requirements (base level care) (98.45(b)(3), (f)(1)(ii)(A), and (f)(2)(ii)), and higher-quality care at each level of quality, as defined by the Lead Agency (98.45(b)(4), (f)(1)(ii)(B), and (f)(2)(iii)). The analysis must identify the gaps between the cost of care and subsidy levels adopted by the state and then be considered as part of the rate setting process.

Note: Any Lead Agency considering using an alternative methodology, instead of a market rate survey, is required to submit a description of its proposed approach to its ACF Regional Child Care Program Office for pre-approval in advance of the Plan submittal (see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/occ/resource/ccdf-acf-pi-2016-08>). Advance approval is not required if the Lead Agency plans to implement both a market rate survey and an alternative methodology. In its request for ACF pre-approval, a Lead Agency must:

- Provide an overview of the Lead Agency's proposed approach (e.g., cost estimation model, cost study/survey, etc.), including a description of data sources.
- Describe what information the Lead Agency will obtain from an alternative methodology that could not be obtained from the required narrow cost analysis.
- Describe how the Lead Agency will consult with the State Early Childhood Advisory Council or similar coordinating body, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, organizations representing child care caregivers, teachers and directors, and other appropriate entities prior to conducting the identified alternative methodology.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will use methods that are statistically valid and reliable and will yield accurate results. For example, if using a survey, describe how the Lead Agency will ensure a representative sample and promote an adequate response rate. If using a cost estimation model, describe how the Lead Agency will validate the assumptions in the model.
- If the proposed alternative methodology includes an analysis of costs (e.g., cost estimation model or cost study/survey), describe how the alternative methodology will account for key factors that impact the cost of providing care, such as: staff salaries and benefits, training

and professional development, curricula and supplies, group size and ratios, enrollment levels, licensing requirements, quality level, facility size, and other factors.

- Describe how the alternative methodology will provide complete information that captures the universe of providers in the child care market.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will reflect variations by provider type, age of children, geographic location, and quality.
- Describe how the alternative methodology will use current data.
- What metrics the Lead Agency will use to set rates based on the alternative methodology.
- Describe the estimated reporting burden and cost to conduct the approach.

A Market Rate Survey (MRS) or an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology must be developed and conducted no earlier than 2 years before the date of submission of the Plan (658E(c)(4)(B)(i) (98.45 (c)). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lead Agencies may request a waiver for up to one additional year (until July 1, 2022) to complete the required MRS or an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. Lead Agencies may also request the required Narrow Cost Analysis be waived for one year (until July 1, 2022). These waiver requests must include a justification linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2.1 Completion of the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology.

Did the state/territory conduct a statistically valid and reliable MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology?

- ☐ Yes. If yes, please identify the methodology(ies) used below to assess child care prices and/or costs.
 - ☐ a. MRS. When was your data gathered (provide a date range, for instance, September – December, 2019)? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ b. ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. Identify the date of the ACF approval and describe the methodology: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☒ No, a waiver is being requested in Appendix A.
 - a. Please identify the Lead Agency's planned methodology(ies) to assess child care prices and/or costs.
 - ☒ i. MRS. If checked, describe the status of the Lead Agency's implementation of the MRS. [ACUDEN defined its needs for the market rate survey and the narrow cost analysis and invited research centers to submit their proposals. These proposals were evaluated and the entity that will be conducting the study has been selected. Work plan and methodology details have begun to be discussed with the objective of completing the study on or before December 2021.](#)
 - ☐ ii. ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. If checked, describe the status of the Lead Agency's implementation of the ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, including if applicable, the date of the ACF approval and a description of the methodology: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- b. If a waiver is requested, Lead Agencies will need to respond to questions 4.2.2-4.5.2 based on data collected for the FY 2019-2021 CCDF Plan or any data collected since then. Identify the date of the Lead Agencies' most recent and complete Market Rate Survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology that will provide data to inform responses to questions 4.2.2–4.5.2. Click or tap here to enter text.

4.2.2 Prior to developing and conducting the MRS, or conducting the ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, the Lead Agency is required to consult with (1) the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body, local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, and other appropriate entities, and (2) organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.45 (e)). Local child care program administrators may also be good informants to Lead Agencies on narrow cost analyses.

Describe how the Lead Agency consulted with the:

- a. State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body: [The results of the 2019 State Plan rate study were presented for recommendations to the former State Advisory Council](#)
 - b. Local child care program administrators: [n/a](#)
 - c. Local child care resource and referral agencies: [n/a](#)
 - d. Organizations representing caregivers, teachers, and directors: [The results of the draft rate study were made available for the members of the Care Center Association for review and for recommendations.](#)
 - e. Other. Describe: [N/A](#)
- 4.2.3 ACF has established a set of benchmarks, largely based on research, to identify the components of a valid and reliable market rate survey (81 FR, p. 67509). To be considered valid and reliable a Market Rate Survey or preapproved alternative methodology meets the following:
- represents the child care market
 - provides complete and current data
 - uses rigorous data collection procedures
 - reflects geographic variations
 - analyzes data in a manner that captures other relevant differences

An MRS can use administrative data, such as child care resource and referral data, if it is representative of the market.

- a. Describe how each of the benchmarks are met in either the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology.
 - i. Represent the child care market: [Sampling Method: Child care providers were identified using the information obtained from the Department of Family Licensing Office. The licensing databases are generally the most comprehensive source of information now of identifying the regulated childcare programs operating legally within a state that provide services to the public \(Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System, 2018a\). The provided data base was revised and transferred the date to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. It included a total of 843 providers. The spreadsheet contained a total of 122 foster homes, 36 institutions, and 2 group homes. These 160 homes and institutions were discarded from the sample, for parents do not pay for the services their children receive. Also, 24 centers were excluded from the sample because they: were duplicates, did not have contact information, or offered subsidized](#)

services only. Therefore, the population surveyed consisted of 659 licensed centers and homes. This number represents 100% percent of applicable providers. A sample of providers was not selected. Instead, all providers that qualified for the study were included (i.e., the target population was surveyed)

- ii. **Provide complete and current data:** [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- iii. **Use rigorous data collection procedures:** [Data Collection Process:](#) Coopsei research staff developed an interview protocol to guide the data collection process. The interview protocol included three documents. The first document is an *Interview Guide* with instructions on how to conduct the phone interview. The interview guide contained information on how to approach care providers and a description of the market rate survey process, purpose, and importance (phone call's purpose, data required, and the importance of the data and their cooperation). It also informed that: participation was voluntary, they had the right to decide to participate, they did not have to answer any question that they did not want to answer, and that answers were confidential. It is consistent with the process informed consent which is an essential component to research ethics principles of confidentiality and the freedom to choose whether to participate or not. The second document was the *Data Collection Sheet*. This sheet included questions related to the childcare facility's contact information and location, and the established rates for each group receiving services. Items related to the childcare facility's contact information and location included: name, address, telephone, region, municipality, type of child care facility (center or licensed home) and whether it was located at an urban or a rural zone. The data related to childcare rates consisted of the following: number of children receiving services, maximum enrollment established in its license, number of hours included in the price, type of rate (hourly, weekly, monthly), full-time rate, part-time rate, registration cost (month, trimester, annual), and summer rate if applicable. The number of children according to the license and the number of children currently enrolled at the childcare facility and these were divided following these categories: Special Needs (18 years and 11 months of age or less), Infants (1 year and 6 months of age or less). and Toddlers (1 year and 7 months until 2 years and 11 months), Preschoolers (3 years until four years and 11 months), and School-age (5 years until 12 years and 11 months). The *Data Collection Sheet* was available in print and online version. The online version facilitated and reduced errors during the data entry process, while the printed version was used when the staff did not have access to the Internet. The third document was a *Call Log* where staff registered their progress and difficulties contacting and the providers. This log was created using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. It provided a record of the date and time in which each call was made. The interviewers registered in the log the progress during telephone calls, as well as the reasons why the provider couldn't be contacted. Childcare personnel within the Administration for the Integral Child Care and Development (ACUDEN, for its Spanish Acronym) were trained to conduct the phone interviews on May 8th, 2019 from 9:00 am through 12:00 pm. The training session included demonstrations and role-playing. CoopSEI recruited additional interviewers to complete the data gathering procedures. They also participated in the training session. Interviewers were continuously supervised and supported to address their concerns and provide answers to questions that emerged during the data collection process. This supervision tasks included giving support to the staff when they needed reassurance that they were conducting the procedures correctly. Interviewers made a minimum of five calls before stating that a care provider cannot be reached or that the care provider was not willing to participate. All available contact phone numbers for each care provider were called during various days and times. When respondents informed that they were not able to provide the data when requested, the survey staff personnel inquired about the best day and time to call back. As a quality assurance process, CoopSEI staff examined, each week, the information entered in the Data Collection Sheet and the Data Logs. The interviewers were contacted immediately when a data error or inconsistency was identified. In the final phase of the data gathering process, a random sample of 40 centers were called again. This process had two purposes: to make sure that child care providers were contacted and to verify the data collected by the staff. The data collection process was carried out from May 9 to June 7, 2019. A total of 6 meetings were held with ACUDEN staff during

the coordination and implementation of the study. ACUDEN, as the Lead Agency, provided continuous monitoring of the process, which is essential to guarantee the success of the survey.

- iv. **Reflect geographic variations:** The market rate study was carried out using a representative sample of care homes and child care centers located at different municipalities of Puerto Rico. From a total of 78 Municipalities, 59 or 76% of them were represented in the study. In the study, differences in rates between urban and rural areas were not considered, but differences in the type of service were considered. In the urban area, there is a greater demand for childcare services offered by centers, and a greater demand for care homes predominated in the rural areas. This information is important when establishing strategies to guarantee equal access to the participating families.
- v. **Analyze data in a manner that captures other relevant differences:** [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- b. **Given the impact of COVID-19 on the child care market, do you think that the data you gathered (as indicated in 4.2.1) on the prices or costs of child care adequately reflect the child care market as you submit this plan?**
 - ☒ No
 - ☐ Yes. If yes, why do you think the data represents the child care market? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4.2.4 Describe how the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology reflects variations in the price or cost of child care services by:

- a. **Geographic area (e.g., statewide or local markets).** Describe: [The rate study was carried out through a representative sample of the childcare centers and care homes from different municipalities on Puerto Rico. From a total of 78 municipalities, 59 or 76% of them participated in the study. Significant rates differences between urban and rural areas were not considered, but differences of the type of service in the areas was considered. In the urban area, there is a greater demand for service in childcare centers, while in the rural areas there is a greater demand for care homes services. This information is important at the time of developing strategies that will guarantee equal access for participating families.](#)
- b. **Type of provider.** Describe: [ACUDEN establishes different rates based on the type of service that the provider offers. The rates are classified in two categories, payments to licensed centers and payments to care homes.](#)
- c. **Age of child.** Describe: [The age categories are infants, maternal, preschool, and school-age. Rates are established based on the child's age and if the present special needs.](#)
- d. **Describe any other key variations examined by the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, such as quality level.** [All childcare centers included in the study are licensed and meet the basic level of quality required by the state laws governing the Licensing Office.](#)

4.2.5 Has the Narrow Cost Analysis been completed for the FY 2022 – 2024 CCDF Plan?

- ☒ No, a waiver is being requested in Appendix A. If no, describe the status of the Lead Agency's upcoming narrow cost analysis. [ACUDEN defined the parameters for its needs for the study and requested proposals from research entities for contracting. The entity that will carry out the study was selected, and meetings have been initiated to define details of the work plan and the methodology. The goal is to complete the study by December 2021.](#)

- ☐ Yes, the narrow cost analysis information is included in the report as described in 4.2.6. If yes, describe how the State/Territory analyzed the cost of child care through a narrow cost analysis for the FY 2022 – 2024 CCDF Plan, including:
- a. The methodology the Lead Agency used to conduct, obtain, and analyze data on the estimated cost of care (narrow cost analysis), including any relevant variation by geographic location, category of provider, or age of child (98.45 (f)(ii)).
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - b. How the methodology addresses the cost of child care providers' implementation of health, safety, quality and staffing requirements (i.e. applicable licensing and regulatory requirements, health and safety standards, training and professional development standards, and appropriate child to staff ratio, groups size limits, and caregiver qualification requirements (98.45 (f)(ii)(A)). [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - c. How the methodology addresses the cost of higher-quality care, as defined by the Lead Agency using a quality rating and improvement system or other system of quality indicators, at each level of quality (98.45 (f)(ii)(B)).
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - d. The gap between costs incurred by child care providers and the Lead Agency's payment rates based on findings from the narrow cost analysis.
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4.2.6 After conducting the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, the Lead Agency must prepare a detailed report containing the results of the MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. The detailed report must also include the Narrow Cost Analysis, as described in 4.2.5, which estimates the cost of care (including any relevant variation by geographic location, category of provider, or age of child) necessary to support (1) child care providers' implementation of the health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements, and (2) higher quality care, as defined by the Lead Agency using a quality rating and improvement system or other system of quality indicators, at each level of quality. For states without a QRIS or for a state with a QRIS system that is currently limited to only certain providers, those states may use other quality indicators (e.g. provider status related to accreditation, PreK standards, Head Start performance standards, school-age quality standards, or state defined quality measures.)

The Lead Agency must make the report with these results widely available no later than 30 days after completion of the report, including posting the results on the Lead Agency website. The Lead Agency must describe in the detailed report how the Lead Agency took into consideration the views and comments of the public or stakeholders.

Describe how the Lead Agency made the results of the market rate survey or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology report widely available to the public (98.45(f)(1)) by responding to the questions below.

- a. Date the report containing results was made widely available—no later than 30 days after the completion of the report. [It was published on July 30, 2019](#)

- b. Describe how the Lead Agency made the detailed report containing results widely available and provide the link where the report is posted. [State Plan in the newspapers for interested persons to access through the web page; www.acuden.pr.gov. It was also promoted through the Puerto Rico Association of Child Care Centers. Paper copies were available for review at the Child Care Program's regional offices and at ACUDEN's Central Headquarters](#)
- c. Describe how the Lead Agency considered stakeholder views and comments in the detailed report. [All comments are received at the ACUDEN's Administrator office to be collected and discuss with the Program Staff. After be evaluated, ACUDEN incorporate those views and recommendation that help to improve the services to the children.](#)

4.3 Establish Adequate Payment Rates

The Lead Agency must set CCDF subsidy payment rates, in accordance with the results of the current MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, as identified in 4.2.1, at a level to ensure equal access for eligible families to child care services that are comparable with those provided to families not receiving CCDF assistance. Lead Agencies must also consider the costs of base and higher quality care at each level as part of its rate setting. The Lead Agency must re-evaluate its payment rates at least every 3 years.

- 4.3.1 Provide the base payment rates and percentiles (based on the most recent MRS as identified in 4.2.1) for the following categories below. Lead Agencies are required to provide a summary of data and facts in their Plan to demonstrate how its payment rates ensure equal access. The preamble to the final rule (81 FR, p. 67512), indicates that a benchmark for adequate payment rates is the 75th percentile of the most recent MRS. The 75th percentile is the number separating the lowest 75 percent of rates from the highest 25 percent. Setting rates at the 75th percentile, while not a requirement, would ensure that eligible children have access to three out of four child care slots.

The 75th percentile benchmark applies to the base rates. Base rates are the lowest, foundational rates before any differentials are added (e.g., for higher quality or other purposes). Further, base rates must be sufficient to ensure that minimum health and safety and staffing requirements are covered.

Percentiles are not required if the Lead Agency conducted an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, but must be reported if the Lead Agency conducted a MRS. For states that conduct an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology, report the base payment rates based on a full-time weekly rate.

The ages and types of care listed below are meant to provide a snapshot of the categories on which rates can be based and are not intended to be comprehensive of all categories that might exist or to reflect the terms used by the Lead Agency for particular ages. If rates are not statewide, please use the most populous geographic region (defined as the area serving highest number of CCDF children) to report base payment rates below.

- a. Fill in the table below based on either the statewide rates or the most populous area of the state (area serving highest number of children accessing CCDF). To facilitate compiling state by state payment rates, provide the full-time weekly base payment rates in the table below. If weekly payment rates are not published, then the Lead Agency will need to calculate its equivalent.

Age of child in what type of licensed child care setting. (All rates are full-time)	Base payment rate (including unit)	Full-time weekly base payment rate	If the Lead Agency conducted an MRS, what is the percentile of the base payment rate?	If the Lead Agency used an alternative methodology what percent of the estimated cost of care is the base rate?
Infant (6 months) Center care	\$379	\$88	75%	N/A
Toddler (18 months) Center care	\$379	\$88	75%	N/A
Preschooler (4 years) Center care	\$369	\$86	75%	N/A
School-age child (6 years) Center care (Based on full-day, full-year rates that would be paid during the summer.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Infant (6 months) Family Child Care	\$231	\$54	75%	N/A
Toddler (18 months) Family Child Care	\$231	\$54	75%	N/A
Preschooler (4 years) Family Child Care	\$222	\$52	75%	N/A
School-age child (6 years) Family Child Care (Based on full-day, full-year rates that would be paid during the summer.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

- b. If the Lead Agency does not publish weekly rates then how were these rates calculated (e.g., were daily rates multiplied by 5 or monthly rates divided by 4.3)? [Monthly rates divided by 4.3](#)

- c. Describe how the Lead Agency defines and calculates part-time and full-time care.
Full-time care consists of 6 hours or more per day, while part-time is 1 to 5 hours per day. [lick or tap here to enter text.](#)
- d. Provide the date these current payment rates became effective (i.e., date of last update based on most recent MRS as reported in 4.2.1). [October 1, 2019](#)
- e. If applicable, identify the most populous area of the state (area serving highest number of children accessing CCDF) used to complete the responses above. [n/a](#)
- f. Provide the citation, or link, if available, to the payment rates www.acuden.pr.gov.
- g. If the payment rates are not set by the Lead Agency for the entire state/territory, describe how many jurisdictions set their own payment rates (98.16(i)(3)).
[n/a](#)

4.3.2 Describe how and on what factors the Lead Agency differentiates payment rates. Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Geographic area. Describe: [n/a](#)
- ☐ b. Type of provider. Describe: [Based on the type of provider, licensed care facility or family home are the corresponding rates.](#)
- ☐ c. Age of child. Describe: [Based on the child's age the category and rate payment are classified, the categories are infant and toddler, pre-school, school.](#)
- ☐ d. Quality level. Describe: [n/a](#)
- ☐ e. Other. Describe: [Special Needs, a different rate is identified for these children](#)

4.3.3 Lead Agencies can choose to establish tiered rates, differential rates, or add-ons on top of their base rates as a way to increase payment rates for targeted needs (i.e., a higher rate for special needs children as both an incentive for providers to serve children with special needs and as a way to cover the higher costs to the provider to provide care for special needs children). Lead Agencies may pay providers more than their private pay rates as an incentive or to cover costs for higher quality care (81 FR, p. 67514).

Has the Lead Agency chosen to implement tiered reimbursement or differential rates?

- ☒ No
- ☐ Yes, If yes, identify below any tiered or differential rates, and at a minimum, indicate the process and basis used for determining the tiered rates, including if the rates were based on the MRS or an ACF pre-approved alternative methodology. Check and describe all that apply.
 - ☐ a. Tiered or differential rates are not implemented. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ b. Differential rate for non-traditional hours. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ c. Differential rate for children with special needs, as defined by the state/territory. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ d. Differential rate for infants and toddlers. Note: Do not check if the Lead Agency has a different base rate for infants/toddlers with no separate bonus or add-on. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- ☐ e. Differential rate for school-age programs. Note: Do not check if the Lead Agency has a different base rate for school-age children with no separate bonus or add-on. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ f. Differential rate for higher quality, as defined by the state/territory. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ g. Other differential rates or tiered rates. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4.3.4 Establishment of adequate payment rates.

- a. Describe how base payment rates are adequate and enable providers to meet health, safety, quality, and staffing requirements under CCDF, and how they were established based on the most recent MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology and the Narrow Cost Analysis, as reported in 4.2.1 and 4.2.5.. In determining compliance with the Act for the equal access provisions in the FY2019-2021 CCDF Plan, the OCC reviewed all the states with payment rates below the 75th percentile benchmark. Of those states, the half with the lowest payment rates were considered non-compliant and placed on a corrective action plan (CAP). These states all had rates below the 25th percentile for either some or all categories of care. The 25th percentile is not to be viewed as a benchmark or a long-term solution to gauge equal access. It is also not to be viewed as sufficient for compliance in future plan cycles. OCC expects to continue to take action against states with the lowest rates in future plan cycles in an effort to keep payment rates moving upward toward ensuring equal access. Note: Per the preamble (81 FR p. 67512), in instances where an MRS or ACF pre-approved alternative methodology indicates that prices or costs have increased, Lead Agencies must raise their rates as a result. [The preliminary rate payments are the ones established in the 2019-2021 state plan as a waiver was requested for the new cost study. Previous rate study, MRS, had adequately validated and complied with a rigorous methodology that considered several factors which affected the operational costs of the care centers while ensuring equal access to participating families. Such costs included expenses to ensure, for example, health and safety issues, quality, etc. At this time, to address those extraordinary expenses resulting from the COVID 19 pandemic, CARES, CRRSA, and ARPA funds are currently being provided to the providers. The funds are available for expenditures related to preventing contagion, including the purchase of protective equipment and disinfection materials, as well as assistance with staffing and physical facilities related expenses.](#)
- b. Describe the process used for setting rates, including how the Lead Agency factors in the cost of care, including any increased costs and provider fees because of COVID-19, and how such costs may be modified after the pandemic subsidies. [The new rates study will include an analysis of the impact on costs because of the pandemic and the effect on the continued and proper compliance regarding health and safety issues.](#)

- 4.3.5 Describe how the Lead Agency took the cost of higher quality, as determined in 4.2.5, into account, including how payment rates for higher-quality care, as defined by the Lead Agency using a QRIS or other system of quality indicators, relate to the estimated cost of care at each level of quality. Note: For states without a QRIS, the states may use other quality indicators (e.g. provider status related to accreditation, PreK standards, Head Start performance standards, or state-defined quality measures). *The MRS will continue to be used under the 2019-21 plan until the new rate study is completed. The MRS took into consideration quality issues defined in the state licensing law. These will be included back into the new study and will take into consideration recent factors that are affecting the overall service quality*
- 4.3.6 Identify and describe any additional facts that the Lead Agency considered in determining its payment rates ensure equal access. If applicable, provide a description of how any additional health and safety costs, because of the COVID-19 pandemic are included in rate setting. *ACUDEN requested a waiver because it believes that because of the pandemic, there is currently a great deal of instability in the childcare services. This instability has led to the closing of centers, limited services, parents using family homes care to prevent contagion, among other situations. A work plan and methodology is being currently developed to consider the current pandemic scenarios and evaluate their effect on the new rates to be included in the new rates*

4.4 Implement Generally Accepted Payment Practices and Ensure Timeliness of Payments

Lead Agencies are required to demonstrate that they have established payment practices applicable to all CCDF child care providers that include ensuring the timeliness of payments by either (1) paying prospectively prior to the delivery of services or (2) paying within no more than 21 calendar days of the receipt of a complete invoice for services. To the extent practicable, the Lead Agency must also support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by (1) paying based on a child's enrollment rather than attendance, (2) providing full payment if a child attends at least 85 percent of the authorized time, (3) providing full payment if a child is absent for 5 or fewer days in a month, or (4) using an alternative approach for which the Lead Agency provides a justification in its Plan (658E(c)(2)(S)(ii); 98.45(I)(2)).

Lead Agencies are required to use CCDF payment practices that reflect generally accepted payment practices of child care providers who serve children who do not receive CCDF-funded assistance. Unless a Lead Agency is able to demonstrate that the following policies are not generally accepted in its particular state, territory, or service area or among particular categories or types of providers, Lead Agencies must (1) pay providers based on established part-time or full-time rates rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time and (2) pay for reasonable, mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents (658E(c)(2)(S); 98.45(I)(3)). Responses may also identify any additional health and safety fees providers are charging as a result of COVID-19.

In addition, there are certain other generally accepted payment practices that are required. Lead Agencies are required to ensure that child care providers receive payment for any services in accordance with a payment agreement or an authorization for services, ensure that child care providers receive prompt notice of changes to a family's eligibility status that could impact payment, and establish timely appeal and resolution processes for any payment inaccuracies and disputes (98.45(I)(4) through (6); 658E(c)(2)(S)(ii); 98.45(I)(4); 98.45(I)(5); 98.45(I)(6)).

4.4.1 Certify by identifying and describing the payment practices below that the Lead Agency has implemented for all CCDF child care providers.

- a. Ensure the timeliness of payments by either (Lead Agency to implement at least one of the following):
- ☐ i. Paying prospectively prior to the delivery of services. Describe the policy or procedure. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☒ ii. Paying within no more than 21 calendar days of the receipt of a complete invoice for services. Describe the policy or procedure. [ACUDEN receives the child's monthly attendance sheets at the Child Care Program's regional offices. This document can be delivered by the provider or the parents in person at the office, by mail or by email. This form must be received no later than 5 business days for the payment to be processed within 21 calendar days. This attendance document will be evaluated by the Eligibility Technician to make sure that the child has met at least an 80% attendance rate, or otherwise has a reason to justify the non-attendance. After evaluation, the technician enters the attendance into the electronic case management system for payment. On the sixth workday, the Finance Office gathers all approved attendance information from the different regional offices and issues the payment for the services to be deposited in or before 21 calendar days. This payment is made by electronic deposit into the provider's bank account.](#)
- b. To the extent practicable, support the fixed costs of providing child care services by delinking provider payments from a child's occasional absences by: Note: The Lead Agency is to choose at least one of the following:
- ☒ i. Paying based on a child's enrollment rather than attendance. Describe the policy or procedure. [In the event of a declared emergency because of a natural disaster or a public health emergency, the ACUDEN administrator may assess the situation to issue payment for enrollment rather than attendance.](#)
 - ☐ ii. Providing full payment if a child attends at least 85 percent of the authorized time. Describe the policy or procedure. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ iii. Providing full payment if a child is absent for five or fewer days in a month. Describe the policy or procedure. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☒ iv. Use an alternative approach for which the Lead Agency provides a justification in its Plan. If chosen, please describe the policy or procedure and the Lead Agency's justification for this approach. [The child must have at least 80% attendance to proceed with the full payment to the provider. In the case of a justifiable reason, such as child or caregiver illness, vacations, medical appointments, or treatments, among others, it is then evaluated an approved, so the provider is not penalized for payment since they do not have control over the situation](#)
- c. The Lead Agency's payment practices reflect generally accepted payment practices of child care providers who serve children who do not receive CCDF subsidies. These payment practices must include the following two practices unless the Lead Agency provides evidence that such practices are not generally accepted in its state (658E(c)(2)(S); 98.45(l)(3)).
- i. Paying on a part-time or full-time basis (rather than paying for hours of service or smaller increments of time). Describe the policy or procedure and include a definition of the time increments (e.g., part time, full-time). [ACUDEN does not pay for services based on an individual hourly basis, but rather categorizes them as either full-time or part-time. Full-time payment consists of a daily 6 to 10 hours of service. On the other hand, part-time consists of one to five hours per day](#)
 - ii. Paying for reasonable mandatory registration fees that the provider charges to private-paying parents. Describe the policy or procedure. [In Puerto Rico, very few childcare centers charge a](#)

registration fee to receive services. In case that parents select one of these centers, they will be required to pay the registration fee. If the parent cannot afford to pay the registration fee, they will be offered all the service alternatives so they can select the one that better accommodates their needs

- d. The Lead Agency ensures that providers are paid in accordance with a written payment agreement or an authorization for services that includes, at a minimum, information regarding provider payment policies, including rates, schedules, any fees charged to providers, including fees related to COVID 19, and the dispute-resolution process.
Describe: All providers who participate in the Child Care Program are given an initial orientation explaining the program's standards and requirements. They also are issued an Eligible Provider Certification that states that they have been evaluated and follow all the program's standards. This document includes all the conditions and responsibilities that both parties, the provider and ACUDEN, must comply with to receive funding from the Program. The provider also receives a copy of the Eligibility Certification of the child that will be served which includes the rate, time schedule and co-payments, if applicable.
- e. The Lead Agency provides prompt notice to providers regarding any changes to the family's eligibility status that could impact payments, and such a notice is sent no later than the day that the Lead Agency becomes aware that such a change will occur. Describe: In cases where parents undergo a change that may affect their Eligibility Certification and this will change the service terms offered by the provider, a copy of the Eligibility Certification is made available to the provider. In cases where the annual review of the certification occurs, a copy is provided to the provider so that they are aware of the new terms that apply for the new 12-month eligibility period.
- f. The Lead Agency has a timely appeal and resolution process for payment inaccuracies and disputes. Describe: Providers claims upon being received in the Child Care Program are answered within 10 business day. In case the claim is related to any fiscal issue, it is referring to the ACUDEN Finance Office, which ensures compliance with Treasury Department regulations. In this case the claimer has 15 days to submit any claim regarding payment. If the provider understands that their situation was not adequately addressed, they have the right to appeal before the Department of the Family's Adjudicative Board, as established in Regulation 8687, Art 6.1, which establishes the conditions and terms for an appeal. This appeal must be filed in a term no longer than 15 days after the determination by ACUDEN.
- g. Other. Describe: N/A

4.4.2 Do payment practices vary across regions, counties, and/or geographic areas?

- ☒ No, the practices do not vary across areas.
- ☐ Yes, the practices vary across areas. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4.4.3 Describe how Lead Agencies' payment practices described in subsection 4.4 support equal access to a full range of providers. [ACUDEN's payment practices have improved significantly, since the CIMA case management system has proven to be much more effective as the database for payment generation. All payments are electronically made, which has speeded up the processes and made ACUDEN a more competitive agency in the marketplace for providers. Additionally, such practices and organization in the Program offer confidence to the provider in offering services to CCDF participants with the assurance that they will receive their payment and that they have the proper and legal procedures to act regarding their claims, which is something they do not receive when providing services to other entities or private individuals.](#)

4.5 Establish Affordable Co-Payments

Family co-payments are addressed in Section 3 related to minimum 12-month eligibility and the graduated phase-out provision and also in this subsection, because they are an important element for determining equal access. If a Lead Agency allows providers to charge amounts more than the required family co-payments, the Lead Agency must provide a rationale for this practice, including how charging such additional amounts will not negatively impact a family's ability to receive care they might otherwise receive, taking into consideration a family's co-payment and the provider's payment rate.

4.5.1 How will the Lead Agency ensure that the family contribution/co-payment, based on a sliding-fee scale, is affordable and is not a barrier to families receiving CCDF services (98.16 (k))? Check all that apply.

- ☐ a. Limit the maximum co-payment per family. Describe: [Co-payments are based on the number of children in a family and are according to a sliding fee scale which takes into consideration the family median income in Puerto Rico . The full copayment is applied to the child with the highest rate, the second child is charged with half of the corresponding copayment, and for the third child and beyond, there is no copayment.](#)
- ☐ b. Limit the combined amount of co-payment for all children to a percentage of family income. List the percentage of the co-payment limit and describe. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ c. Minimize the abrupt termination of assistance before a family can afford the full cost of care ("the cliff effect") as part of the graduated phase-out of assistance discussed in 3.2.5. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ d. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

4.5.2 Does the Lead Agency choose the option to allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment in instances where the provider's price exceeds the subsidy payment (98.45(b)(5))?

- ☐ No
- ☒ Yes. If yes:

- i. Provide the rationale for the Lead Agency’s policy to allow providers to charge families additional amounts above the required co-payment, including a demonstration of how the policy promotes affordability and access for families. To ensure the parent's choice for childcare service, ACUDEN give them information about different providers as their needs, in case the parent like to choose any other provider who charge any additional amounts above the rate and copayment, the parent is allow to choose it and assume the payment for the extra cost
- ii. Provide data (including data on the size and frequency of such amounts) on the extent to which CCDF providers charge additional amounts to families.
N/A
- iii. Describe the Lead Agency’s analysis of the interaction between the additional amounts charged to families with the required family co-payment and the ability of current subsidy payment rates to provide access to care without additional fees.
This information is not gathered because it has never been a significant one, since parents' selection is usually of providers that accept ACUDEN's rate. This information will be evaluated as part of the new rate study to determine if it is meaningful for ACUDEN to consider developing alternatives to address the issue

5 Establish Standards and Monitoring Processes to Ensure the Health and Safety of Child Care Settings

Lead Agencies are required to certify that there are in effect licensing requirements applicable to all child care services in the state/territory, which supports the health and safety of all children in child care. States and territories may allow licensing exemptions. Lead Agencies must describe how such licensing exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, and development of CCDF children in license-exempt care (98.16 (u)).

Lead Agencies also must certify that there are in effect health and safety standards and training requirements applicable to providers serving CCDF children whether they are licensed or license- exempt. These health and safety requirements must be appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served, must include specific topics and training on those topics, and are subject to monitoring and enforcement procedures.

The organization of this section begins with a description of the licensing system for all child care providers in a state or territory and then moves to focus specifically on CCDF providers who may be licensed, or those exempt from licensing. The next section addresses child-staff ratios, group size limits, and required qualifications for caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.16(m)) serving CCDF children. The section then covers the health and safety requirements; standards, training, and monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that CCDF child care providers comply with licensing and health and safety requirements (98.16(n)). Finally, Lead Agencies are asked to describe any exemptions for relative providers (98.16(l)). In some cases, CCDF health and safety requirements may be integrated within the licensing system for licensed providers and may be separate for CCDF providers who are license-exempt. In either case, Lead Agencies are expected to identify and describe health and safety requirements for all providers receiving CCDF.

Note: When responding to questions in this section, the OCC recognizes that each state/territory identifies and defines its own categories of care. The OCC does not expect states/territories to change their definitions to fit the CCDF-defined categories of care. For these questions, provide responses that closely match the CCDF categories of care.

Criminal background check requirements are included in this section (98.16(o)). It is important to note that these requirements apply to all child care staff members who are licensed, regulated, or registered under state/territory law and all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services.

Note: When asked for citations, responses can include state statute, regulations, administrative rules, policy manuals or policy issuances. See the Introduction on page 4 for more detail.

5.1 Licensing Requirements

Each state/territory must certify it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to all child care services provided within the state/territory (not restricted to providers receiving CCDF funds) and provide a detailed description of these requirements and how the requirements are effectively enforced (658E(c)(2)(F)). If any types of providers are exempt from licensing requirements, the state/territory must describe those exemptions and describe how these exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, or development of children. The descriptions must also include any exemptions based on provider category, type, or setting; length of day; and providers not subject to licensing because the number of children served falls below a Lead Agency-defined threshold and any other exemption to licensing requirements (658E(c)(2)(F); 98.16(u); 98.40(a)(2)(iv)).

- 5.1.1 To certify, describe the licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided within the state/territory by identifying the providers in your state/territory that are subject to licensing using the CCDF categories listed below. Check, identify, and describe all that apply, and provide a citation to the licensing rule.

☒ a. Center-based child care.

- i. Identify the providers subject to licensing: It includes any type of establishment, with or without monetary purposes, is dedicated to the childcare of seven (7) or more children, for a part of the twenty-four (24) hours of the day. This type of establishment have a curriculum and a activities program intended for the care, integral development and children's learning activities performed by personnel that are not children's relatives or legal guardians.
- ii. Describe the licensing requirements: Licensing Law and Regulation 8860 general requirements for the child care establishments and some specific requirements depending on the type of provider to which it refers. Article 12 of Regulation 8860 also establishes the requirements relates to personnel qualifications and the establishment. The Establishment requirements are outlined in section 12.1, including the following:
 - (1) A Use Permit from the Permit Management Office (OGPe) or the Municipal Selective Urban Development Permits Office (OMPUS);
 - (2) A annual sanitary license issued by the Department of Health's Environmental Health Program
 - (3) Certification from the Puerto Rico Fire Departments Fire Prevention Bureau (annually);
 - (4) Certification form the Municipal Tax Collection Center also known as (CRIM);
 - (5) When applicable, Registration and evidence of Municipal Patent payment;
 - (6) (When applicable), State Insurance Fund Policy;
 - (7) A valid public liability policy
 - (8) Menu certified by a licensed dietitian or nutritionist or certification by the School Lunchroom Division, as applicable;
 - (9) Sketch that include the entire area with its interior and exterior measurements that will be used to provide the service;
 - (10) the necessary equipment and materials used in working conditions for child care service
 - (11) Operational Emergency Plan (POE).
 - (12) For new applications, a budget and income evidence.
 - (13) Annual financial report reflecting the economic capacity to continue providing the service
 - (14) An annual fumigation contract with evidence of the service rendered,
 - (15) A lease agreement indicating the intended use of the structure (if owned by the operator they shall submit a copy of the title deed or certification from CRIM);
 - (16) It shall comply with the provisions of Title 11 of the ADA Act of 1990, Americans with Disabilities Act; Copy of Incorporation from the Puerto Rico State Department and the members of the Board of Directors and Good Standing certification, as applicable;

- (17) Regulations establishing the norms and/or rules that will govern the establishment
- (18) Protocols such as: management of medical emergencies and contagious diseases, safe administration of medications, preventive calls, drills for escapes, physical or sexual aggression assault, emergency drills for the safe handling of breast milk, confidentiality protocol (policies and procedures), suspected children abuse, neglect and/or exploitation according to Law 246-2011, contagious disease management, and others as needed;
- (19) Shall count with a records system to safeguard the security, protection and confidentiality of the enrollment, parents and employees.
- (20) Every facility offering transportation services shall have a transportation vehicle and driver available. Both shall comply with the Public Service Commission's standards as applicable;
- (21) Every establishment shall be provided with a working telephone service, which shall be located in an accessible area for use. The establishment shall have in plain view, in a promptly available area, the emergency agencies' numbers, such as the Puerto Rico Police, Fire Department, Office of Emergency Management, among others;
- (22) Inventory of equipment;
- (23) It shall also have a first aid kit. In terms of personnel requirements, section 12.2 of the Regulations establishes the following: In terms of personnel requirements, section 12.2 establishes the following:
 - (1) Background check that includes: a. Health Certificate (annual) b. Negative criminal record certificate (every 6 months). c. Negative Certification of Verification of History in Registry of Persons Convicted of Sexual offenses and Abuse issued by the Puerto Rico Police annually). d. Annual abuse and/or neglect history record of the individual's place of residence. e. Negative certification from ASUME. f. Annual certification of tax returns filed with the Department of the Treasury. g. Three reference letters from persons that includes, first and last name, address and telephone number of the person who signs the letter. This requirement applies only to foster and care homes. h. Written authorization to investigate your conduct with all due confidentiality measures and due process required by law, from the Puerto Rico Police, the Departments of Justice and Family and other federal authorities, respectively. i. Certification of Current First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation training. j. Evidence of academic preparation and trainings completed.

iii. **Provide the citation:** (1) Regulations for the Licensing of Child Care, Development and Learning Establishments of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Regulation 8860, Articles 6 and 12.

(2) Act 173 of 2016, is the Act for the Licensing of establishments dedicated to the Care, Development and Learning of Children of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

☒ **b. Family child care. Describe and provide the citation:**

- i. **Identify the providers subject to licensing:** A family child care home is a family household that provides care on a regular basis for up to six (6) children who are unrelated by blood to that family, during part of the twenty-four (24) hours of the day. This includes in the maximum capacity, all children twelve (12) years of age or younger, with family ties, residing in the home. The care home may be a single person.
- ii. **Describe the licensing requirements:** Licensed Homes require a comprehensive social study that evidences the capacity of the care home to offer adequate care, development and learning services to respond to the child's well-being, safety and biopsychosocial needs. This must consider social aspects related to the individual functioning of each family member. This family child care home is required:
 - 1. Will comply with the requirements established in Article 12 of these regulations when applicable.
 - 2. The service shall be performed at the family home.
 - 3. The person in whom the license is granted shall be responsible for the direct service of the children. The person shall be twenty-one (21) years of age or older.
 - 4. The operator shall be knowledgeable in childcare, development, and learning, in accordance with the child's developmental stage.
 - 5. The operator and other members of the family shall be persons of good reputation and moral solvency, as well as accepted by the community.

6. All members of the household shall sign a written consent to the use of the home as a resource for the care home.

7. Members of the family childcare home shall be capable of demonstrating affection towards the children and understanding of their needs as well as the flexibility they need when giving the children the attention and care they require.

8. The operator shall demonstrate the ability to solve the day-to-day problems of the home and those related to the child's needs.

- iii. Provide the citation: (1)Regulations for the Licensing of Child Care, Development and Learning Establishments of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Regulation 8860, Articles 6 and 15.
(2)Act 173 of 2016, The Act for Licensing of Care Development and Learning Establishments for Children of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

☐ c. In-home care (care in the child's own) (if applicable):

i. Identify the providers subject to licensing: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

ii. Describe the licensing requirements: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

iii. Provide the citation: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

5.1.2 Identify the CCDF-eligible providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. Describe exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption. Describe how such exemptions do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children (658E (c)(2)(F); 98.40(a)(2)). Do not include exempt relative care providers, this information will be collected in Section 5.6.

a. License-exempt center-based child care. Describe and provide the citation by answering the questions below.

i. Identify the CCDF-eligible center-based child care providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. Describe the exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption: [Centers participating in the Head Start and Early Head Start program that are regulated by all applicable federal legislation and regulations.](#)

ii. Provide the citation to this policy: [Law 173 of 2016, the Law for the Licensing of Child Care, Development and Learning Establishments of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Article 1.05.](#)

iii. Describe how the exemptions for these CCDF-eligible providers do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children. [Head Start and Early Head Start federal regulations and legislation are more extensive and stricter than the mentioned state law therefore, the children in these centers are safe. In addition to applying Head Start criteria, these centers go through the Child Care Health and Safety Program's facility monitoring process as well as the Program's background check process.](#)

b. License-exempt family child care. Describe and provide the citation by answering the questions below.

i. Identify the CCDF-eligible family child care providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. Describe the exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption: [1\) Non-Family Exempt Provider - A provider who provides services in a private residence to a maximum of two children that is exempt from obtaining a Department of Family License. However, not being related or affiliated with the family served does not exempt them from](#)

the Health and Safety requirements of the Child Care Program. There is no limitation in the number of care hours per day or in the children's ages. (2) Family Provider - means a provider who is 21 years of age or older who provides care to eligible children who are they relative having blood relationships within the third level of consanguinity or affinity. All children under their care and who are sponsored by the Program must be their relatives. There is no limitation on the number of hours of care per day or the ages. Provider must live in separate residence from eligible families.

- ii. Provide the citation to this policy: (1) Law 173 of 2016, is the law for the Licensing of Child Care Development and Learning Establishments of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Article 1.05.

(2) ACUDEN Child Care Programs Health and Safety Program Procedures Manual, Article II, Section 11.

(3) Child Care Program Regulations, Regulation 8687, Chapter 4, Sections 4.5 and 4.14 to 4.17.

Describe how the exemptions for these CCDF-eligible providers do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children: Non-Family Exempt Provider - These providers are not licensed by the Department of Family, but require the ACUDEN Child Care Program Eligible Provider Certification. Health and Safety area of the Child Care Program conducts an inspection of the suppliers' physical facilities based on a checklist which will evaluate its dangerous conditions. This checklist is aligned with the Caring for our Children standards and requirements. Also, the provider must go through the background process check that ensures that the child is not in the care of a person with a history of dangerousness. Family provider - The close kinship ties with the child guarantee a high quality service that includes care and affection for the child, ensuring the child's well-being and safety

- c. In-home care (care in the child's own home by a non-relative): Describe and provide the citation by answering the questions below.
 - i. Identify the CCDF-eligible in-home child care (care in the child's own home by a non-relative) providers who are exempt from licensing requirements. Describe the exemptions based on length of day, threshold on the number of children in care, ages of children in care, or any other factors applicable to the exemption. A non-relative exempt provider may provide care in the child's home when the child is experiencing mobility difficulties or has a medical condition or special needs that make the child's home the safest place to be cared for. During a state emergency declaration that affects children's participation in child care centers and schools, this service also can be authorized.
 - ii. Provide the citation to this policy: ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article II, Section 11.
- iii. Describe how the exemptions for these CCDF-eligible providers do not endanger the health, safety, and development of children. In the case of a non-relative exempt provider, a criminal background check is conducted. Child Care Health and Safety staff will visit the child's residence to complete a health and safety form developed for these purposes.

5.2 Standards for Ratios, Group Size and Qualifications for CCDF Providers

Lead Agencies are required to have child care standards for providers receiving CCDF funds, appropriate to the type of child care setting involved, that address appropriate ratios between the number of children and number of providers in terms of the age of the children, group size limits for specific age populations, and the required qualifications for providers (658E(c)(2)(H); 98.41(d); 98.16(m)). For ease of responding, this section is organized by CCDF categories of care, licensing status, and age categories. Respondents should map their Lead Agency categories of care to the CCDF categories. Exemptions for relative providers will be addressed in subsection 5.6.

5.2.1 Describe how the state/territory defines the following age classifications. For instance, Infant: 0-18 months.

- a. Infant. Describe: [Birth to eighteen \(18\) month](#)
- b. Toddler. Describe: [From nineteen \(19\) months to two \(2\) years and eleven months](#)
- c. Preschool. Describe: [From three \(3\) years of age to four \(4\) years and eleven \(11\) months.](#)
- d. School-Age. Describe: [From five \(5\) years old, up to twelve \(12\) years and eleven \(11\) months.](#)
[Children with special needs up to eighteen \(18\) years of age.](#)

5.2.2 To demonstrate continued compliance, provide the ratio and group size for settings and age groups below.

- a. Licensed CCDF center-based care:
 - i. Infant
 - A. Ratio: [Maximum of four \(4\) children per adult \(4:1\)](#)
 - B. Group size: [Up to 10 children](#)
 - ii. Toddler
 - A. Ratio: [Maximum of four \(4\) children per adult \(4:1\).](#)
 - B. Group size: [Up to 16 children](#)
 - iii. Preschool
 - A. Ratio: [Maximum of eight \(8\) children per adult](#)
 - B. Group size: [Up to 24 children](#)
 - iv. School-Age
 - A. Ratio: [Maximum of twelve \(12\) children per adult](#)
 - B. Group size: [Up to 30 children](#)
 - v. Mixed-Age Groups (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: [N/A](#)
 - B. Group size: [N/A](#)
 - vi. If any of the responses above are different for exempt child care centers, describe the ratio and group size requirements for license-exempt providers.
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- b. Licensed CCDF family child care home providers:
 - i. Mixed-Age Groups

- A. Ratio: [N/A](#)
 - B. Group size: [N/A](#)
 - ii. Infant (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: Click or tap here to enter text.
 - B. Group size: [Up to six \(6\) children](#)
 - iii. Toddler (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: [Maximum of six \(6\) children per adult \(6:1\).](#)
 - B. Group size: [Maximum of six \(6\) children per adult \(6:1\).](#)
 - iv. Preschool (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: [Maximum of six \(6\) children per adult \(6:1\).](#)
 - B. Group size: [Maximum of six \(6\) children per adult \(6:1\).](#)
 - v. School-Age (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: [Maximum of six \(6\) children per adult \(6:1\).](#)
 - B. Group size: [Maximum of six \(6\) children per adult \(6:1\).](#)
 - vi. If any of the responses above are different for exempt child care homes, describe the ratio and group size requirements for license-exempt family child care home providers.
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- c. Licensed in-home care (care in the child's own home):
- i. Mixed-Age Groups (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - B. Group size: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ii. Infant (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: [Two children per adult \(2:1\).](#)
 - B. Group size: [Two children \(2\).](#)
 - iii. Toddler (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: [Two children per adult \(2:1\).](#)
 - B. Group size: [Two children \(2\).](#)
 - iv. Preschool (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: [Two children per adult \(2:1\).](#)
 - B. Group size: [Two children \(2\).](#)
 - v. School-Age (if applicable)
 - A. Ratio: [Two children per adult \(2:1\).](#)
 - B. Group size: [Two children \(2\).](#)
 - vi. Describe the ratio and group size requirements for license-exempt in-home care.
[Two children per adult \(2:1\).](#)

5.2.3 Provide the teacher/caregiver qualifications for each category of care.

a. Licensed Center-Based Care

- i. Describe the teacher qualifications for licensed CCDF center-based care, including any variations based on the ages of children in care: [Teachers in Licensed Child Care Centers are required to have a bachelor's degree in education and a current CDA relevant to the infant/toddler level \(teachers with a concentration in early childhood or preschool that includes infants and toddlers are exempt from the CDA requirement\). Individuals who hold a current teacher certification in the preschool area issued by the Department of Education may also be teachers.](#)
- ii. Describe the director qualification for licensed CCDF center-based care, including any variations based on the ages of children in care or the number of staff employed: [The Director must have a bachelor's degree completed with the required minimum courses for a major in early childhood education; with a current CDA and pertinent to the developmental level being served](#)
- iii. If any of the responses above are different for license-exempt child care centers, describe which requirements apply to exempt centers: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- iv. If applicable, provide the website link detailing the center-based teacher and director qualifications. <https://childcare.familia.pr.gov/resources-links-1/> (Law 173)

b. Licensed Family Child Care

- i. Describe the provider qualifications for licensed family child care homes, including any variations based on the ages of children in care: [\(1\) The person to whom such license is issued shall be responsible for the direct service of the children. He/she shall be twenty-one \(21\) years of age or older.](#)
[\(2\) The operator shall be knowledgeable in childcare, development, and learning, according to the child's developmental stage.](#)
[\(3\) The operator and other members of the household shall be individuals of good moral reputation and character, as well as acceptable to the community.](#)
[\(4\) All members of the household shall consent in writing to the use of the household as a resource.](#)
[\(5\) The members of the family childcare home shall be capable of demonstrating affection and understanding of the children's needs and flexibility in providing the care and attention they need.](#)
[\(6\) The operator shall demonstrate the ability to solve day-to-day problems of the home and those related to the child's needs.](#)
- ii. If any of the responses above are different for license-exempt family child care homes, describe which requirements apply to exempt homes: [The exempt non-family and family home are required that the person in the name of which the license is granted shall be responsible for the direct service of the children. Must be twenty-one \(21\) years of age or older.](#)
- iii. If applicable, provide the website link detailing the family child care home provider qualifications: <https://childcare.familia.pr.gov/resources-links-1/> (Health & Safety Procedure)

c. Regulated or registered In-home Care (care in the child's own home by a non-relative)

- i. Describe the qualifications for licensed in-home child care providers (care in the child's own home) including any variations based on the ages of children in care:
[n/a](#)
- ii. If any of the responses above are different for license-exempt in-home care providers, describe which requirements apply to exempt in-home care providers:
[The exempt non-family and family home are required that the person in the name of which the](#)

license is granted shall be responsible for the direct service of the children. Must be twenty-one (21) years of age or older.

5.3 Health and Safety Standards and Training for CCDF Providers

The state/territory must describe its requirements for pre-service or orientation training and ongoing training. Lead Agencies are required to have minimum pre-service or orientation training requirements (to be completed within 3 months), as appropriate to the provider setting and the age of children served. This training must address the required health and safety topics (658E(c)(2)(I)(i) and the content area of child development. Lead Agencies have flexibility in determining the number of training hours to require, and they may consult with Caring for our Children Basics for best practices and the recommended time needed to address these training requirements.

Lead Agencies must also have ongoing training requirements for caregivers, teachers, and directors who are caring for children receiving CCDF funds (658E(c)(2)(I)(i); 98.44(b)(1)(iii)). Lead Agencies are to report the total number of ongoing training hours that are required each year, but they do not have to report these hours out by topic (658E(c)(2)(G)(iii)). Ongoing training requirements will be addressed in 5.3.13.

Both preservice/orientation and ongoing trainings should be a part of a broader systematic approach and progression of professional development (as described in section 6) within a state/territory.

States and territories must have health and safety **standards** for programs (e.g., child care centers, family child care homes, etc.) serving children receiving CCDF assistance relating to the required health and safety topics as appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served (98.41(a)). This requirement is applicable to all child care programs receiving CCDF funds regardless of licensing status (i.e., licensed or license-exempt). The only exception to this requirement is for relative providers, as defined in 98.2. Lead Agencies have the option of exempting relatives from some or all CCDF health and safety requirements (98.42(c)). Exemptions for relative providers' standards and training requirements will be addressed in question 5.6.3.

To certify, describe the following health and safety requirements for programs serving children receiving CCDF assistance on the following topics (98.16(I)) identified in questions 5.3.1 – 5.3.12. Note: Monitoring and enforcement will be addressed in subsection 5.4.

5.3.1 Prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunizations) health and safety standards and training requirements.

- a. Standard(s)
 - i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. [The Child Care Program's Protocol for the Prevention of Infectious Diseases in Child Care Development Centers and Homes](#) defines infectious diseases as an illness caused by infection with a variety of germs that can be viruses, bacteria, fungi or parasites. Most of these infectious diseases can be transmitted from person to person. The Protocol requires practices that prevent infectious diseases like maintain areas clean, sanitizes and environment hygienic.
 - ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.

There are no variations, the requirements are the same, however, simpler material is used for orientation and training purposes so that better understanding is achieved by the provider in the non-family exempt home

- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is(are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI, Licensed Child Care Center/Home Care Program CCSS-18-16 Monitoring Form. Child Care Program Regulations Art. 5.2. Protocol for the prevention of infectious diseases in Child Care and Child Development Centers and Homes of the Child Care Program](#)

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for these training requirements, including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2.](#)
- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are no variations to the pre-service orientation or the requirement for ongoing training. This training is offered to the exempt provider at the time of the home visit, while for licensed homes and licensed facilities it is offered on a group basis, prior to the inspection visit](#)
- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below how the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
 - ☒ Pre-Service
 - ☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
 - ☒ Yes
 - ☐ No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.
[It is required and offered four \(4\) hours of annual training on health and safety topics that include this standard. Material is continually posted on the ACUDEN website or sent via email with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep up to date with prevailing practices and related issues in order to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines that are published and sent to suppliers. An example of this is a handbook prepared on the management of COVID-19.](#)

5.3.2 Prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and the use of safe-sleep practices.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. [As defined by the Child Care](#)

Program's Sudden Death Prevention Protocol, sudden death is the unexpected death of an infant less than one year of age, which remains unexplained, following a complete investigation including an autopsy, an examination of the death scene, and a review of the infant's medical history. The Sudden Death Prevention Protocol requires the following practices: (1) Staff training on sudden death prevention; (2) Infant sleep area features; (3) Infant sleep area safety; (4) Proper infant sleep practices; (5) Crib safety standards and guidelines (crib-to-cradle distance) US Consumer Product Safety Commission crib requirements; (6) Supervision of the infant while sleeping and when waking; (7) Proper pacifier (pacifier) use practices. In order to prevent the occurrence of SIDS, the provider is required to: (1) Train staff annually on proper SIDS prevention practices; (2) Ensure that each child has his or her own crib and that the crib is labeled with the child's name, cleaned and disinfected; (3) Place infants on their backs to prevent SIDS unless otherwise indicated by a physician for a child's health condition; (4) Ensure that the sleep environment is safe to prevent SIDS: The crib should have a fitted; (5) The crib should not have monitors, positioning devices, sheets, cushions and/or toys; (6) There should be a three-foot distance between crib and crib; (7) There should be no items on the crib rail; (8) The temperature of the sleep area should be adequate so as to prevent the infant from being tucked in with sheets; (9) There is good lighting in the sleep area; (10) Follow proper pacifier use practices according to the American Academy of Pediatrics; (11) As part of the prevention of plagiocephaly, practices recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics are used; (12) Adequate supervision of the infant while sleeping.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.

For the care center and the care home, the requirements are the same. Guidelines and recommendations are provided for non-family exempt providers. Prevention measures are the same for all services.

- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is(are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDENS Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual, Article VI, Monitoring Form, Licensed Child Care Center/Home Care Program CCSS-18-16. Child Care Program Regulation 8687, Art. 5.2. Protocol for the Prevention of Sudden Death for the Child Care Program](#)

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for this training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual, Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2.](#)

- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are no variations, the requirements are the same, however, simpler material is used for purposes of orientation and training so that a greater understanding is achieved by the provider in the non-family exempt home.](#)

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

☒ Pre-Service

☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire

- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☒ Yes

☐ No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

They are required and are offered four (4) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.

5.3.3 Administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. Under the Medication Storage and Supply Protocol, Storage refers to the proper way of securing or storing medications for children participating in services. Medication Supply refers to the procedure in which a medication is provided to a person who requires it. For purposes of the protocol medication is a manufactured chemical substance, to prevent, treat or cure disease. Non-prescription medication refers to any medication that can be obtained without the need for medical authorization. The protocol requires the following practices:
- (1) Designating personnel who will be responsible for administering the medication.
 - (2) Training all staff in the proper administration of medication.
 - (3) Ensuring that the medication received includes the child's name and surname, name of the prescribing physician, expiration date of the medication, medical instructions on how to administer the medication, and that it is in its original container with a safety cap so that it cannot be opened by children.
 - (4) Designate a storage place for both refrigerated and non-refrigerated medications.
 - (5) Medications must be stored in a location that must be suitable, out of reach of children, and must be at the appropriate temperature for the conservation of the medication.
 - (6) Obtain parental or guardian consent authorizing the dispensing to children of prescription and nonprescription medications.
 - (7) Wash hands before administering the medication,
 - (8) Read the instructions regarding the medication, including the required dosage, whether it needs to be administered with or without food, and any other relevant information.
 - (9) Administration of the medication to the child and document on the Medication Supply Record form, including date, time, name of medication and dose administered.
 - (10) If medications require refrigeration, they should be stored in a plastic container in the refrigerator at the appropriate temperature.
- ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
There are no variations
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is(are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual, Article VI, Monitoring Form, Licensed Child Care Center/Home Care Program CCSS-18-16. Child Care Program Regulation 8687, Art. 5.2. Protocol of Protocol of Storage and Supply of Medications of the Child Care Program

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2.](#)
- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are basically no variations, the requirements are the same, although simpler material is used for orientation and training purposes in order to ensure a better understanding of the provider in the non-family exempt home.](#)
- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below how the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
☒ Pre-Service
☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
☒ Yes
☐ No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.
[They are required and are offered four \(4\) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.](#)

5.3.4 Prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and allergic reactions.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. [According to the Food Allergy Management Protocol, a food allergy is when the body reacts against non-harmful proteins found in food. The person's immune system overreacts and may present the following symptoms: skin problems such as red spots, swelling, respiratory problems \(sneezing, wheezing and throat tightness\), stomach symptoms \(nausea, vomiting and diarrhea\) or circulatory problems \(pale skin, dizziness, or loss of consciousness\). This protocol requires the following practices:](#)
 - [1. At the time of enrollment of a child for the service, the parent is asked to complete a form about the allergies the child has presented.](#)
 - [2. Children with medical needs will require a healthcare plan](#)
 - [3. In cases where the child has multiple allergies, the parent or caregiver must supply the necessary foods in their diet, if the center does not have all the foods required for the diet.](#)
 - [4. In cases of children with allergies that are reported by the parent or caregiver, measures must be taken to prevent cross-contamination with the allergen in the food.](#)
 - [5. Maintain evidence that employees have been oriented about allergies of children that receive services.](#)

6. Prevent children from sharing food with children who have food allergies.
 7. Washing surfaces that have had contact with the food to which the child is allergic.
 8. In educational activities that use materials, they should be careful with the materials that cause allergies.
 9. When having any activity outside the center, the list of foods that the child is allergic must be taken with the child.
 10. In the event of an emergency allergic response from a child, 9-1-1 and the parents will be called
- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
There are no variations
 - iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual, Article VI, Monitoring Form, Licensed Child Care Center/Home Care Program CCSS-18-16. Child Care Program Regulation 8687, Art. 5.2. Child Care Program Food Allergy Management Protocol](#)
- b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training
- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2.](#)
 - ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are basically no variations, the requirements are the same, although simpler material is used for orientation and training purposes in order to ensure a better understanding of the provider in the non-family exempt home.](#)
 - iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

☒ Pre-Service
☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
 - iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☒ Yes
☐ No
 - v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.
[They are required and are offered four \(4\) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.](#)

5.3.5 Building and physical premises safety, including the identification of and protection from hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. The Child Care Provider Eligibility Determination Procedure, the Child Care Program Regulations (Regulation 8687) and the Regulations for Licensing Child Care and Learning Establishments of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (Regulation 8860) established policies and standards to ensure that the providers' facilities are safe and free of hazards for children that receive services. A Safe Center/Home must follow all agencies that regulate childcare services as required by the Department of the Family Licensing Act. To inspect their facilities.

These policies require the compliance with the following regulatory agencies:

1. State Emergency Management Agency.
2. Puerto Rico Fire Department (May be substituted by the Single Permit).
3. Puerto Rico Department of Health (May be substituted by the Single Permit).
4. Public Service Commission.
5. Department of the Family.
6. Health and Safety Child Care Program.

Providers need to observe the following practices:

1. maintain appropriate child to adult ratios, always in accordance with the Child Care Program Regulations.
2. Must have an emergency plan approved by the Puerto Rico State/Municipal Emergency Management Agency.
3. Maintain an adequate physical facility, specifically in the following areas:
 - a. Developmental environments. They must have adequate lighting and ventilation, be clean and organized. Must be free of leaks and other undesirable conditions such as pests and hazardous materials. Must have emergency exits and routes. Must have adequate equipment including fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and emergency lighting. Doors and windows must be in good condition as well as window screens and/or plastic sheeting.
 - b. Kitchen - must be clean and organized. It must have proper equipment and materials for cleaning. The area should be completely marked off. Equipment and utensils are stored safely and out of the reach of children.
 - c. Canteen - Equipment should be in good condition. The dining room should be clean, organized, and well-marked.
 - d. Restrooms - Restrooms should be clean and should not store materials or items that could cause accidents or pose hazards. The benches used must be stable. At least one of the restrooms must be ADA compliant.
- Yard area - must have a gate that does not allow free access to strangers, or free exit for children. Equipment must be in good condition, areas must be level, free of rocks, holes, roots, poisonous shrubs, and plants. If high equipment is used, it must be surrounded by a buffer surface. Shade must be provided, and green areas must be in good condition.
- b. Parking - The drop-off and pick-up area must be safe. It must be completely enclosed.
- c. Entrances and exits - Centers must have a minimum of two emergency exits and these must be properly labeled.
- d. Inspection and Isolation Area - The center must have a daily inspection area that ensures the child's privacy. It must also have an isolation area that guarantees adequate rest, away from other children.
- e. Common corridors - The common corridors must be completely clear and ensure that no strangers enter the center's facilities.

The licensed supplier must comply with a monitoring visit by the Licensing Office. Providers must go through a monitoring process by the Child Care Health and Safety Program.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
No Variations exist.
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [Child Care Provider Eligibility Determination Procedure. -Child Care Program Regulations \(Regulation 8687\). - Regulations for the Licensing of Child Care, Development and Learning Establishments of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico \(Regulation 8860\).](#)

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2.](#)
- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are no variations, the requirements are the same, however for orientation and training purposes more simple material is used so that a better understanding is achieved by the provider in the non-family exempt home.](#)
- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
 - ☒ Pre-Service
 - ☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
 - ☒ Yes
 - ☐ No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.
[They are required and are offered four \(4\) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.](#)

5.3.6 Prevention of shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma, and child maltreatment.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. [According to the Child Care Program's Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Protocol, a Shaken Baby has suffered a type of brain trauma inflicted when it has been violently shaken. Shaking can result in brain damage and even](#)

death. Characteristic injuries of this syndrome are hemorrhaging within the brain, retinal hemorrhages, damage to the spinal cord and neck, fractures to ribs and other bones, and other symptoms of shaken baby are extreme irritability, lethargy, poor appetite, respiratory problems, seizures, vomiting, pale and bluish skin. The protocol covers the following contents:

1. Daily inspection.
2. Protocol for incidents of suspected mistreatment.
3. Practices to be carried out when an infant cries.

For the provider to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome, the following practices should be followed:

1. Train all center or home staff.
2. Conduct daily inspections of the infant following the inspection procedure.
3. Implement the protocol for the suspicion of maltreatment in cases where this concern arises.
4. Provider are expected to follow mandated actions designed to calm a crying infant. A sign highlighting these actions are to be posted in the child care program

- ii. Describe any variations in the standard(s) by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
[There are no variations.](#)
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual, Article VI, Monitoring Form, Licensed Child Care Center/Home Care Program CCSS-18-16. Child Care Program Regulation 8687, Art. 5.2. Shaken Baby Syndrome Prevention Protocol of the Child Care Program](#)

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2.](#)
- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are no variations, the requirements are the same, however for orientation and training purposes more simple material is used so that a better understanding is achieved by the provider in the non-family exempt home.](#)
- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
☒ Pre-Service
☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
☒ Yes
☐ No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.
[They are required and are offered four \(4\) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed](#)

with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.

- 5.3.7 Emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster or a human-caused event (such as violence at a child care facility), within the meaning of those terms under section 602(a)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5195a(a)(1)). Emergency preparedness and response planning (at the child care provider level) must also include procedures for evacuation; relocation; shelter-in-place and lockdown; staff and volunteer training and practice drills; communications and reunification with families; continuity of operations; and accommodations for infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. According to Law 173-2016, a supplier must have an Emergency Operational Plan detailing the procedures to address potential emergencies and disasters such as fire, atmospheric events, earthquakes, terrorism, gas emissions, preventive call protocol, among others. This plan must be certified by the State Emergency Management Office on an annual basis. The emergency plan must address the following topics:
1. Plan an effective response to handle the emergency.
 2. Mitigate any effects and damage from the emergency.
 3. Preparing facilities to prevent or minimize loss of life, property damage.
 4. Response during and after the emergency.
 5. Establish a recovery system plan.
 6. Agencies that will collaborate in such an emergency.
 1. The supplier shall prepare its plan according to its social and geographic situation, emphasizing the possible risks according to its location and presenting a plan for each type of event.
 2. The plan must include the proper evacuation process. This evacuation plan should be posted in a visible place in the center. It must be discussed with employees at the time of recruitment and with parents at the time of the child's enrollment. The provider should ensure that each employee, child, or parent knows the meeting place in the case of an emergency.
 3. Center must identify a nearby safe location as rendezvous point. At the time of the emergency personnel should carry a safety backpack with them.
 4. In the case that the children and staff must remain at the Center during an emergency, they must follow the established lockdown protocol plan for each emergency
 5. Personnel should be familiar with this emergency plan and should receive annual training in its implementation.
 6. The plan must include monthly emergency drills. These drills should address different types of emergencies and children and parents should know the proper way to respond to each kind of emergency.
 7. As an important part of the management of the emergency, it is always important to maintain communications. The centers should have a telephone number that is always available. A current list of names and telephone numbers to contact parents and other family members in an emergency should be available. A list of necessary emergency telephone numbers such as the Puerto Rico Police, Fire Department, State/Municipal Emergency Management, and Medical Emergencies, among others, should also be available.
 8. The emergency plan should establish the necessary measures to successfully reestablish service. After an emergency has passed, it is necessary to return to normality as soon as possible, if the conditions allow it. The specific actions to be taken by the provider to reestablish services should be identified.
 9. The emergency plan must contain sufficient information about the specific special needs that

children with chronic health conditions and the services that they need. Also must contain instructions, phone numbers and other information that allow provider to manage they needs

- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
[There are no variations](#)
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN's Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual, Article VI, Licensed Child Care Center/Home Care Home Monitoring Form CCSS-18-16. Regulation 8687 of the Child Care Program. Article 3.01 of Law 173-2016](#)

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN's Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI, Licensed Child Care Center/Home Care Home Monitoring Form CCSS-18-16. Regulation 8687 of the Child Care Program. Article 3.01 of Law 173-2016](#)
- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are no variations, the requirements are the same, however for orientation and training purposes more simple material is used so that a better understanding is achieved by the provider in the non-family exempt home.](#)
- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
 - ☒ Pre-Service
 - ☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
 - ☒ Yes
 - ☐ No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.
[They are required and are offered four \(4\) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.](#)

5.3.8 Handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of bio-contaminants.

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. [The Caregiver Eligibility Determination Procedures Manual](#) provides the Care Home/Center Worksheet, CCSS-18-16. It stipulates as one of the standards, that the home/center must keep materials such as detergents, chemicals, possible poisons, and flammables out of the reach of children. Compliance with this standard is verified during each Health and Safety monitoring visit. To ensure compliance with this standard during pre-service orientations, suppliers are oriented about the importance of complying with this standard, The following requirements must be followed
 1. Ensure that cleaning materials, detergents, aerosol cans, pesticides, poisons and other chemicals are stored completely separated from food, locked and out of the reach of children.
 2. Ensure that cleaning materials, detergents, aerosol cans, pesticides, poisons and other chemicals are kept stored in their original containers and with their original labels.
 3. Only use cleaning materials, detergents, aerosol cans, pesticides, poisons and other chemicals for their intended purpose, according to the manufacturer's instructions and taking precautions to avoid contaminating play surfaces, toys, food, and food preparation areas.
 4. Ensure that all medications are labeled, have child-resistant caps, and are stored at appropriate temperatures, separate from food, and under lock and key.
 5. Follow all recommendations outlined in the Protocol for the proper disposal of bio-contaminating materials, including any fluid such as blood and diaper disposal.
 6. Train personnel about the proper handling of these materials and provide evidence of training.
 - ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
[There are no variations.](#)
 - iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual, Article VI, Monitoring Form, Licensed Child Care Center/Home Care Program CCSS-18-16. Child Care Program Regulation 8687.](#)
- b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training
- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2](#)
 - ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are no variations, the requirements are the same, however, for orientation and training purposes a more user-friendly material is used in order to achieve a better understanding by the provider in the non-family exempt home.](#)
 - iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.

☒ Pre-Service
☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
 - iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☒ Yes

☐ No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

They are required and are offered four (4) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.

5.3.9 Precautions in transporting children (if applicable).

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. The Public Service Commission, by virtue of the powers conferred by the Public Service Act, Act 109-1962, establishes the requirements that a person must have to operate a public vehicle in Puerto Rico. For such purposes, the Procedures Manual for the Determination of Eligibility of the Provider of Care Services establishes in the Home/Care Center Monitoring Form CCSS-06-16 the obligation that every driver who provides transportation services to children receiving services from the CCDF must be licensed by the Public Service Commission that include safety measures as car seats. The content covered under the standard refers to the compliance with Law 109-1962 and Regulations 5107 and 5268 of the Public Service Commission. In order to comply with this standard, all providers providing transportation services to children who receive CCDF funds must have a driver who is duly licensed by the Public Service Commission to offer transportation services. This license must be valid at all times. When visiting the Child Care Program, staff verifies the existence and validity of this license
- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
There are no variations
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. Law 109-1962, Regulations 5107 and 5268 of the Public Service Commission and the Procedures Manual for the Determination of Caregiver Eligibility, Home/Care Center Monitoring Form CCSS-06-16.

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for the training requirements, including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2.
- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? There are no variations, the requirements are the same, however, for orientation and training purposes a more user-friendly material is used in order to achieve a better understanding by the provider in the non-family exempt home.

- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
 - ☒ Pre-Service
 - ☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
 - ☒ Yes
 - ☐ No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

They are required and are offered four (4) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.

5.3.10 Pediatric first aid and pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. According to the Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and First Aid Protocol, First Aid is immediate and provisional care given to victims of an accident or illness before receiving the services of a licensed medical doctor in Puerto Rico. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) refers to a life-saving emergency procedure used when a person has stopped breathing, or the heart has stopped beating. This protocol covers the following topics:
 - 1. Training. Staff training.
 - 2. First aid kit.
 - 3. First aid backpack for trips outside the center or home.
 - 4. First aid or CPR to be provided according to the appropriate training course.
 - 5. General recommendations for providing first aid.
 - 6. Steps to follow in case of an emergency.

To comply with the Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and First Aid Protocol, the supplier shall meet the following requirements:

 - 1. Staff working in the center or home must take a pediatric first aid and **pediatric** CPR course offered by a certified entity. The training must include demonstration and practice to ensure that the technique can be properly performed during an emergency. The training must be always kept current.
 - 2. The first aid kit must be properly equipped, accessible to adults and out of the reach of children.
 - 3. Whenever there is an event away from the center, the provider must carry their first aid backpack. Emergency medications that a child may require should be included in the backpack.
 - 4. In the event of an emergency, first aid and CPR should be provided by the provider according to the course training.
 - 5. Providers should follow the training when giving first aid.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
[There are no variations.](#)
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN's Health and Safety Procedures Manual for the Child Care Program Article VI, Licensed Child Care Center/Home Care Home Monitoring Form CCSS-18-16. Child Care Program Regulation 8687. First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Protocol](#)

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for this training requirement, including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2.](#)
- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are no variations, the requirements are the same, however, for orientation and training purposes a more user-friendly material is used in order to achieve a better understanding by the provider in the non-family exempt home.](#)
- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
 - ☒ Pre-Service
 - ☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
 - ☒ Yes
 - ☐ No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.
[They are required and are offered four \(4\) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.](#)

5.3.11 Recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect. Note: The description must include a certification that child care providers within the state comply with the child abuse reporting requirements of section 106(b)(2)(B)(i) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(i)).

a. Standard(s)

- i. Provide a brief description of the standard(s). This description should identify the practices which must be implemented by child care programs. [The Child Care Program](#)

Regulation #8687 in Article 4.3 regarding Affirmative Actions Against Child Abuse, mandates all service providers to take affirmative actions to prevent and report situations of child abuse. For this purpose, the Administration for the Integral Care and Development of Children (hereinafter, "ACUDEN") has established the Reporting incidents of suspected child abuse through the Child Safety, Welfare and Protection Act. protocol. This Protocol adopts the definitions of abuse, sexual abuse and negligence established in the Child Safety, Welfare and Protection Act (Act 246-2011) Law 246-2011 establishes in its Article 7 and Article 21 the citizen and government obligation to report situations where there is a suspicion of abuse. The legal duty to report arises upon suspicion. The Reporting Incidents of Suspected Abuse through the Child Safety, Welfare and Protection Act Protocol provides the necessary guidance for any provider on how to make referrals of suspected abuse for the Department of Family Services to conduct the appropriate investigation. To meet with the standards for detecting and reporting child abuse, providers must abide by the following practices: Law 246, Law for the Safety, Welfare and Protection of Minors, requires that there be established procedures for the detection of incidents of both family and institutional child abuse. For this reason, ACUDEN has developed a Protocol for Reporting Incidents of Suspected Child Abuse under the Child Safety, Welfare and Protection Act.

- ii. Describe any variations in the standards by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), and the age of the children in care.
[There are no variations](#)
- iii. The Lead Agency must certify that the identified health and safety standard(s) is (are) in effect and enforced through monitoring. Provide the citation(s) for the standard(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [Law 246-2011 Art. 3, Art. 7, Art. 21 and Protocol for Reporting Incidents of Suspected Abuse through the Law for the Safety, Welfare and Protection of Minors, Sections 1 to 7. Child Care Program Regulations, Article 4.3. ACUDEN's Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual, Article VI, Monitoring Form, Licensed Child Care Center/Home CCSS-18-16.](#)

b. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Provide the citation(s) for this training requirement(s), including citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. [ACUDEN Child Care Program Health and Safety Procedures Manual Article VI. Child Care Program Regulations Art 5.2.](#)
- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for the standard(s). Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? [There are no variations, the requirements are the same, however, for orientation and training purposes a more user-friendly material is used in order to achieve a better understanding by the provider in the non-family exempt home.](#)
- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
 - ☒ Pre-Service
 - ☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?

☒ Yes

☐ No

- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding the standard(s)? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update the health and safety practices as described in the standards above.

They are required and are offered four (4) hours of annual training on health and safety topics which include this standard. Material is continuously posted on the ACUDEN website or emailed with health and safety information. Health and safety personnel keep current with prevailing practices and related issues to update information or create the necessary protocols and guidelines, which are published and sent to suppliers.

5.3.12 Child Development. Lead Agencies are required to describe in their plan how training addresses child development principles, including the major domains of cognitive, social, emotional, physical development and approaches to learning (98.44(b)(1)(iii)).

a. Pre-Service and Ongoing Training

- i. Describe the training content and provide the citation(s) for the training requirement(s). Include citations for both licensed and license-exempt providers. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- ii. Describe any variations in training requirements for this topic. Do training requirements vary by category of care (i.e. Center, FCC, In-home), licensing status (i.e. licensed, license-exempt), or the age of the children in care? *Click or tap here to enter text.*
- iii. To demonstrate compliance, certify by checking below when the state/territory requires this training topic be completed by providers during either pre-service or during an orientation period within three (3) months of hire.
- ☐ Pre-Service
- ☐ Orientation within three (3) months of hire
- iv. Does the state/territory require that this training topic be completed before caregivers, teachers, and directors are allowed to care for children unsupervised?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- v. How do providers receive updated information and/or training regarding this topic? This description should include methods to ensure that providers are able to maintain and update their understanding of child development principles as described in the topic above. *Click or tap here to enter text.*

5.3.13 Provide the number of hours of ongoing training required annually for eligible CCDF providers in the following settings (658E(c)(2)(G)(iii):

- a. Licensed child care centers: **4 hours**
- b. License-exempt child care centers: **4 hours**
- c. Licensed family child care homes: **4 hours**
- d. License-exempt family child care homes: *The non-family exempt provider receives a pre-service orientation during the monitoring visit. In addition, they are provided with Health and Safety information material. And they have to comply with the 4 hours training each year.*
- e. Regulated or registered In-home child care: **4hours**

f. Non-regulated or registered in-home child care: [N/A](#)

5.3.14 In addition to the required standards, does the Lead Agency require providers to comply with the following optional standards? If checked, describe the standards, how often the training is required and include the citation. (Please check all that apply)

- ☒ **a. Nutrition:** According to the Evaluation Protocol for Menu Cycles in the Centers, a menu cycle is defined as a set of menus designed by a licensed dietitian-nutritionist from Puerto Rico. It contains planned healthy and nutritious meals and snacks for pre-established days or periods. This protocol and other materials address the following topics:
1. Requirements for providers participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (PACNA).
 2. Requirements for providers who do not participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (PACNA).
 3. Infant formula management.
 4. Handling of breast milk.
 5. Receiving and preparing infant formulas.
 6. Introduction of solid foods for infants.
 7. Food allergies.
 8. Good nutrition for infants.
 9. Maternal feeding.
 10. Foods's high in iron.
 11. Mealtime for healthy eating in children.
- For the provider to meet the nutrition standards, they shall:
1. if a participant of the PACNA Program provides the current PACNA Certification or Compliance Agreement.
 2. If not a participant of the PACNA Program, its menu must comply with the provisions of Law 45-2004 of the College of Nutritionists-Dietitians of Puerto Rico.
 3. The menu must be always made visible to parents.

☒ **b. Access to physical activity:** The Development Unit works with the Creative Curriculum which promotes the development of physical activities from birth to age 5. The Creative Curriculum directs educators to develop physical activities in and outside of developmental settings. The use of developmental skills tools aims at developing motor skills in accordance with the particularities of each child, which means that the teacher or primary caregiver should plan and develop physical activities in and outside of the developmental settings. Additionally, appropriate practices encourage the use of activities to maintain good health. It requires the development of activities where children can learn about good nutrition, taking care of their bodies, trying new foods, serving as a model in the eating process, among others. The Weekly Planning document used by the Child Development Unit at Delegated Funding Providers and Managed Centers requires planning activities for motor and physical development in and outside of the developmental environment.

Click or tap here to enter text.

- ☒ **c. Caring for children with special needs:** The special needs population is served at all ages and through all modalities of the Child Care Program. All Child Care Program areas require procedures to meet the standards for serving children with special needs. From child to adult ratios, screening, adapting developmental activities, service coordination, intervention in the natural environment, adaptation of educational equipment and materials, provision of assistive and adaptive equipment, menu adaptation to special diets and specialized training. Regarding health and safety, Providers are required to comply with the requirements of the ADA in terms of physical facility access, bathroom sizes, door sizes, ramps, playground equipment accessible to children with disabilities, among others. Emergency plans, menu modifications for children with food allergies, medication administration procedures, among others, are also adapted.
- ☐ **d. Any other areas determined necessary to promote child development or to protect children's health and safety (98.44(b)(1)(iii)).** Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

5.4 Monitoring and Enforcement Policies and Practices for CCDF Providers

5.4.1 Enforcement of licensing and health and safety requirements.

Lead agencies must certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that all child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF services comply with all applicable state and local health and safety requirements, including those described in 98.41 (98.42(a)). This may include, but is not limited to, any systems used to ensure that providers complete health and safety trainings, any documentation required to be maintained by child care providers, or any other monitoring procedures to ensure compliance. Note: Inspection requirements are described starting in 5.4.2.

- a. To certify, describe the procedures to ensure that CCDF providers comply with the required **Health and Safety Standards** as described in Section 5.3. Providers that offer services through the CCDF and in order to obtain the Department of the Family License must comply with all Law 173-2016 requirements, the granting of this license implies that the provider has all permits and certifications issued by the regulatory agencies in effect. In addition to complying with the Department of the Family License, all providers must have the Eligible Provider Certification (CCSS-14-16). The granting of both documents allows for the authorization of funds to be issued to providers. The Eligible Provider Certification is based on the Department of Family Services License; a provider that does not have the license will not be visited by the Child Care Program. For a provider to obtain Eligible Provider Certification, the provider must comply with the Child Care Program Health and Safety requirements. To do so, the provider must receive a pre-service orientation, initiate the background check process, and provide evidence of all the documents required for the evaluation. In addition, the applicant must successfully pass the Child Care Health and Safety monitoring evaluation. The form used to evaluate providers includes the evaluation of all protocols included in 5.3 of this plan.
- b. To certify, describe the procedures to ensure that CCDF providers comply with the required **Health and Safety Training** as described in Section 5.3. Suppliers are evaluated at least once a year through an announced or unannounced visit by Health and Safety personnel. This evaluation verifies compliance with the above-mentioned protocols. In addition, the Health Unit also visits suppliers to evaluate compliance and offer guidance on appropriate practices to them.
- c. To certify, describe the procedures to ensure that CCDF providers comply with all other applicable state and local health, safety, and fire standards. To ensure compliance with the requirements of other state agencies, the permits, licenses, and certifications of other agencies are evaluated during the monitoring visit. The permits evaluated include the following:
 1. Emergency Management State Agency - The Center or Home's emergency plan must be evaluated and certified by the state/municipal emergency agency.
 2. Puerto Rico Fire Department - The Puerto Rico Fire Department issues an annual permit. This Department visits the facilities annually to ensure compliance.
 3. Puerto Rico Department of Health - The Puerto Rico Department of Health grants the Health Permit, for this purpose it visits the facilities for evaluation on an annual basis.
 4. Sole Permit - The Sole Permit replaces the Fire Department and Health Department permits.
 5. Public Service Commission - It is granted for life by this commission after an evaluation.
 6. Department of Family - A biannual visit is performed to certify compliance and evaluate the requirements of the Licensing and Regulation Law.

5.4.2 Inspections for licensed CCDF providers.

Lead agencies must require licensing inspectors to perform inspections—with no fewer than one pre-licensure inspection for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards—of each child care provider and facility in the state/territory. Licensing inspectors are required to perform no fewer than one annual, unannounced inspection of each licensed CCDF provider for compliance with all child care licensing standards; it shall include an inspection for compliance with health and safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41) and fire standards; inspectors may inspect for compliance with all three standards—health, safety, and fire—at the same time (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(II); 98.16 (n); 98.42(b)(2)(i)).

Certify by describing, in the questions below, your state/territory’s monitoring and enforcement procedures to ensure that licensed child care providers comply with licensing standards, including compliance with health and safety (including, but not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41) and fire standards.

a. Licensed CCDF center-based child care

i. Describe your state/territory’s policies and practices for pre-licensure inspections of licensed child care center providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.

[Article 12 of Regulation 8860 for the Licensing of Centers and Homes, specifically establishes the staff and facility requirements. Regarding Facility requirements, section 12.1 lists the following:](#)

- [1. Use Permit from the Office of Permit Management \(OGPe\) or the Municipal Office of Selective Urban Development Permits \(OMPUS\).](#)
- [2. Department of Health Environmental Health Program Sanitation License \(annual\). \(This permit may be substituted for the single permit\).](#)
- [3. Certification from the Fire Prevention Bureau of the Puerto Rico Fire Department \(annual\). \(This permit may be substituted for the single permit\).](#)
- [4. Certification of the Municipal Tax Collection Center \(CRIM\).](#)
- [5. Registration and evidence of payment of Municipal Patent, when applicable.](#)
- [6. State Insurance Funds Policy, when applicable.](#)
- [7. Public Liability Policy in force, with evidence of payment.](#)
- [8. Menu certified by a licensed dietitian nutritionist or certified by the School Lunchroom Division, as applicable.](#)
- [9. Sketch that includes all areas and their interior and exterior measurements to be used for service.](#)
- [10. Necessary equipment and materials in functional condition in all service areas](#)
- [11. Operational Emergency Plan \(EOP \)](#)
- [12. In new applications, a budget and evidence of income shall be submitted](#)
- [13. Financial report \(annual\)](#)
- [14. Annual fumigation contract and evidence of service rendered.](#)
- [15. Lease agreement indicating the use to be made of the structure. If owned by the operator, a copy of the title deed or CRIM certification must be submitted.](#)
- [16. Comply with the provisions of Title 11 of the ADA of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\).](#)
- [17. Copy of Incorporation of the Department of State of Puerto Rico and of the members of the Board of Directors and certification of Good Standing as applicable.](#)
- [18. Regulations establishing the norms or rules that govern the establishment.](#)
- [19. Protocols establishing the expected practices for the child cares establishment.](#)
- [20. Records - record keeping system to safeguard the safety, security and confidentiality of enrollment, parents and employees.](#)
- [21. Transportation - Every facility providing this service shall have available a motor vehicle and driver. Both shall comply with the established standards of the Public Service Commission, as](#)

applicable.

22. Telephone Service - Every establishment shall be provided with a working telephone service, which shall be located in an accessible place for its use. The establishment shall have in plain view, in a readily available area, the numbers of the emergency agencies (Puerto Rico Police, Fire Department, Office of Emergency Management, other).

23. Equipment inventory.

24. First aid kit.

25. Once a provider complies with these requirements, it will be able to obtain a license from the Department of the Family. If licensed by the Department of Family Services, the provider may apply for an Eligible Provider Certification through the Child Care Program. To obtain this certification the provider must meet the background check requirements and must successfully pass the Health and Safety monitoring

- ii. Describe your state/territory's policies and practices for annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF child care center providers. Article 9 of Regulation 8830 and Law 176-2016 states that the Department of the Family Licensing Office visits providers four times a year, one (1) time every three (3) months. The Child Care Program on the other hand conducts an initial announced visit through the Health and Safety Area and afterwards conducts an annual unannounced visit, according to the Procedure for Determination of Provider Eligibility, Chapter VII, Section C.
- iii. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:
 - ☐ A. Once a year
 - ☒ B. More than once a year. Describe: The provider is visited four times a year by the Licensing Office staff and one unannounced visit by Child Care Health and Safety personnel
- iv. If applicable, describe the differential monitoring process and how these inspections ensure that child care center providers continue to comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards. Does not apply, the same monitoring procedure applies for all centers.
- v. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF center providers. Article 9 and Article 12 of Regulation 8860 / Article 4.14 Child Care Program Regulation 8687 / Procedure for Determination of Provider Eligibility.

b. Licensed CCDF family child care home

- i. Describe your state/territory's policies and practices for pre-licensure inspections of licensed family child care providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards. Article 12 of Regulation 8860 for the Licensing of Centers and Homes, specifically establishes the staff and facility requirements. Regarding the requirements of the Establishment, Section 12.1 lists the following:
 - 1.Certification from the Fire Prevention Bureau of the Puerto Rico Fire Department (annually).
 - 2.Certification from the Municipal Tax Collection Center (CRIM).
 - 3.Registration and evidence of payment of Municipal Patent, when applicable.
 - 4.State Insurance Funds Policy, when applicable.
 - 5.Public liability insurance policy in effect, with evidence of payment.
 - 6.Certified menu by a licensed nutritionist dietician or certified by the School Lunchroom Division, as applicable.
 - 7. sketch - shall include all areas and their interior and exterior measurements to be used for the service.
 - 8.Necessary equipment and materials in working condition for all service areas
 - 9. Operational Emergency Plan (EOP). It will include the procedures to face potential emergencies and disasters, such as: fire, atmospheric phenomena, earthquakes, terrorism, gas

emissions, preventive call protocol, among others. The plan will be certified by the State Office of Municipal Emergency Management.

10. In new applications, a budget and evidence of income
11. Financial report (annually)
12. Annual fumigation contract and evidence of service rendered.
13. Lease agreement indicating the use to be made of the structure. If owned by the operator, a copy of the title deed or CRIM certification must be submitted.
14. Comply with the provisions of Title 11 of the ADA of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
15. Copy of Puerto Rico Department of State Incorporation and of the members of the Board of Directors as well as certification of Good Standing, as applicable.
16. Regulations establishing the normative or rules that govern the establishment
17. Description of the objectives and services. h. Personnel policies.
18. Protocols establishing the expected practices for the child care establishment
19. Records - record keeping system to safeguard the safety, security and confidentiality of enrollment, parents and employees.
20. Transportation - Every facility providing this service shall have a motor vehicle and driver available. Both shall meet the standards established by the Public Service Commission as applicable.
21. Telephone Service - Every establishment shall be provided with a working telephone service, which shall be in an accessible location for its use. The establishment shall have in plain view, in a readily available area, the numbers of the emergency agencies (Puerto Rico Police, Fire Department, Office of Emergency Management, and others).
22. Equipment inventory.
23. First aid kit.

- ii. Describe your state/territory's policies and practices for annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF family child care providers. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- iii. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:

- ☒ A. Once a year
- ☐ B. More than once a year. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- iv. If applicable, describe the differential monitoring process and how these inspections ensure that family child care providers continue to comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards. [There is no difference with the monitoring process.](#)

- v. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF family child care providers. [Article 9 and Article 12 of Regulation 8860 / Article 4.14 Child Care Program Regulation 8687 / Procedure for Determination of Provider Eligibility.](#)

c. Licensed in-home CCDF child care

- i. Does your state/territory license in-home child care (care in the child's own home)?

☒ No (Skip to 5.4.3 (a)).

☐ Yes. If yes, answer A – D below:

- A. Describe your state/territory's policies and practices for pre-licensure inspections of licensed in-home care (care in the child's own) providers for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards.

[Not applicable](#)

- B. Describe your state/territory's policies and practices for annual, unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF child care in-home care (care in the child's own home) providers.
[Not applicable](#)
 - C. Identify the frequency of unannounced inspections:
 - ☐ 1. Once a year
 - ☒ 2. More than once a year. Describe: [Not applicable](#)
 - D. If applicable, describe the differential monitoring process and how these inspections ensure that in-home care (care in the child's own providers continue to comply with the applicable licensing standards, including health, safety, and fire standards.
 - E. List the citation(s) for your state/territory's policies regarding inspections for licensed CCDF in-home care (care in the child's own home) providers.
[Not applicable](#)
- d. List the entity(ies) in your state/territory that is responsible for conducting pre-licensure inspections and unannounced inspections of licensed CCDF providers.
[Not applicable](#)

5.4.3 Inspections for license-exempt center-based and family child care providers.

The Lead Agency must have policies and practices that require licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) to perform an annual monitoring visit of each license-exempt CCDF provider for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(IV); 98.42(b)(2)(ii)). Inspections for relative providers will be addressed in question 5.6.4. At a minimum, the health and safety requirements to be inspected must address the standards listed in subsection 5.3 (98.41(a)).

To certify, describe the policies and practices for the annual monitoring of:

- a. License-exempt center-based CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used. [License-exempt providers are certified under head start standards. They are visited by CCDF and Head Start health and safety on an initial announced visit and then annually on an unannounced visit. Also they are visited by Head Start.](#)
 - i. Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure. [Article 9 and Article 12 of Regulation 8860 / Article 4.14 Child Care Program Regulation 8687 / Procedure for Determination of Provider Eligibility.](#)
- b. License-exempt family child care CCDF providers, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring is used. [Non-family exempt suppliers are initially visited on an announced visit. Subsequently, they are visited annually on an unannounced basis](#)
 - i. Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure. [Article 12 of Regulation 8860 / Article 4.14 Child Care Program Regulation 8687 / Procedure for Determination of Provider Eligibility.](#)

5.4.4 Inspections for license-exempt in-home care (care in the child's own home).

Lead Agencies have the option to develop alternate monitoring requirements for care provided in the child's home that are appropriate to the setting. A child's home may not meet the same standards as other child care facilities and this provision gives Lead Agencies flexibility in conducting more streamlined and targeted on-site inspections. For example, Lead Agencies may choose to monitor in-home providers on basic health and safety requirements such as training and background checks. Lead Agencies could choose to focus on health and safety risks that pose imminent danger to children in care. This flexibility cannot be used to bypass the monitoring requirement altogether. States should develop procedures for notifying parents of monitoring protocols and consider whether it would be appropriate to obtain parental permission prior to entering the home for inspection (98.42(b)(2)(iv)(B)).

- a. To certify, describe the policies and practices for the annual monitoring of license-exempt in-home care, including if monitoring is announced or unannounced, occurs more frequently than once per year, and if differential monitoring procedures are used.
[The visit to the exempt provider who provides services in the child's home is made on an announced basis. The residence to be assessed is the child's residence and is assessed for inspection.](#)
- b. Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure. [Article 12 of Regulation 8860 / Article 4.14 Child Care Program Regulation 8687 / Procedure for Determination of Provider Eligibility.](#)
- c. List the entity(ies) in your state/territory that are responsible for conducting inspections of license-exempt CCDF providers: [Child Care Health and Safety Program.](#)

5.4.5 Licensing Inspectors (or qualified inspectors designated by the Lead Agency).

Lead Agencies will have policies and practices that ensure that individuals who are hired as licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) are qualified to inspect child care providers and facilities and have received health and safety training appropriate to the provider setting and age of the children served. Training shall include, but is not limited to, those requirements described in 98.41(a)(1) and all aspects of the state's licensure requirements (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(I); 98.42(b)(1-2)).

- a. To certify, describe how the Lead Agency ensures that licensing inspectors (or qualified monitors designated by the Lead Agency) are qualified to inspect child care facilities and providers [The Department of the Family's Licensing Office requires all Licensing Officers to have a bachelor's degree. English and Spanish language proficiency are also required. Child Care Monitors are required to have a bachelor's degree and be fluent in English and Spanish. Both Licensing Officers and Health and Safety Monitors receive continuous education and training as part of their Professional Development.](#)
- b. To certify, describe how inspectors and monitors have received training on health and safety requirements that are appropriate to the age of the children in care and the type of provider setting (98.42(b)(1-2)). [Health and safety inspectors are trained in emergency management, CPR and first aid, and receive education on the different stages of child development. They are also oriented and trained on detailed information of the protocols required by CCDF.](#)
- c. Provide the citation(s) for this policy or procedure. [Article 12 of Regulation 8860 / Article 4.14 Child Care Program Regulation 8687 / Procedure for Determination of Provider Eligibility](#)

5.4.6 The states and territories shall have policies and practices that require the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers and facilities in the state/territory to be maintained at a level sufficient to enable the state/territory to conduct effective inspections of child care providers and facilities on a timely basis in accordance with federal, state, and local laws (658E(c)(2)(K)(i)(III); 98.42(b)(3)).

- a. To certify, describe the state/territory policies and practices regarding the ratio of licensing inspectors to child care providers (i.e. number of inspectors per number of child care providers) and facilities in the state/territory and include how the ratio is sufficient to conduct effective inspections on a timely basis. *The ratio of suppliers for inspectors that we currently have is thirty (30) suppliers for each monitor. This ratio is sufficient and provides space for new suppliers being served and adequate follow-up can be provided in case there are improvement plans*
- b. Provide the policy citation and state/territory ratio of licensing inspectors.
The ratio of suppliers to monitors is not established in any regulation or procedure because it is variable and depends on the number of available suppliers.

5.5 Comprehensive Background Checks

The CCDBG Act requires states and territories to have in effect requirements, policies and procedures to conduct comprehensive background checks for all child care staff members (including prospective staff members) of all child care programs that are 1) licensed, regulated, or registered under state/territory law; or, 2) all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers) (98.43(a)(1)(i)). Background check requirements apply to any staff member who is employed by a child care provider for compensation, including contract employees and self-employed individuals; whose activities involve the care or supervision of children; or who has unsupervised access to children (98.43(2)). For family child care homes, this requirement includes the caregiver and any other adults residing in the family child care home who are age 18 or older (98.43(2)(ii)(C)). This requirement does not apply to individuals who are related to all children for whom child care services are provided (98.43(2)(B)(ii)). Exemptions for relative providers will be addressed in 5.6.5.

A comprehensive background check must include eight (8) separate and specific components (98.43(2)(b)), which encompass three (3) in-state checks, two (2) national checks, and three (3) interstate checks (if the individual resided in another state in the preceding 5 years).

5.5.1 Background Check Requirements. In the table below, certify by checking that the state has policies, and is conducting checks for the required background check components, ensuring that these requirements are in place for all licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers and for all other providers eligible to deliver CCDF services (e.g., license-exempt CCDF eligible providers), in accordance with 98.43(a)(1)(i), 98.43(a)(2) and 98.16(o).

- a. Components of In-State Background Checks

Component	Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers	All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services
i. Criminal registry or repository using fingerprints in the current state of residency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Citation: N/A	Citation: N/A
ii. Sex offender registry or repository check in the current state of residency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Citation: Art. 2.10 Law 173-2016 and Art, 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program.	Citation: Art, 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program
iii. Child abuse and neglect registry and database check in the current state of residency	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Citation: Art. 2.10 Law 173-2016 and Art, 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program.	Citation: Art, 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program

b. Components of National Background Check

Component	Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers	All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services
i. FBI Fingerprint Check	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Citation: Art. 2.10 Law 173-2016 and Art, 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program.	Citation: Regulation 8687 Child Care Program
ii. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) name-based search	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Citation: Art. 2.10 Law 173-2016 and Art, 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program.	Citation: Regulation 8687 Child Care Program

c. Components of Interstate Background Checks

Component	Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers	All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services
i. Criminal registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years, with the use of fingerprints being optional. Note: It is optional to use a fingerprint to conduct this check. Searching a general	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Citation: Art. 2.10 Law 173-2016 and Art, 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program	Citation: Regulation 8687 Child Care Program

Component	Licensed, regulated, or registered child care providers	All other providers eligible to deliver CCDF Services
public facing judicial website does not satisfy this requirement. This check must be completed in addition to the national FBI history check to mitigate any gaps that may exist between the two sources (unless the responding state participates in the National Fingerprint File program).		
ii. Sex offender registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years. Note: It is optional to use a fingerprint to conduct this check. This check must be completed in addition to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) to mitigate any gaps that may exist between the two sources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citation: Art. 2.10 Law 173-2016 and Art, 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citation: Regulation 8687 Child Care Program
iii. Child abuse and neglect registry and database in any other state where the individual has resided in the past 5 years Note: This is a name-based search	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citation: Art. 2.10 Law 173-2016 and Art, 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Citation: Art. 4.5 Regulation 8687 Child Care Program

5.5.2 Procedures for a Provider to Request a Background Check.

Child care providers are required to submit requests for background checks for each of their staff members to the appropriate state or territorial agency, which is to be defined clearly on the state or territory Web site. Family child care home providers must also submit background check requests for all household members over the age of 18. The requests must be submitted prior to when the individual becomes a staff member and must be completed at least once every five years per § 98.43(d)(1) and (2). The state or territory must ensure that its policies and procedures under this section, including the process by which a child care provider or other state or territory may submit a background check request, are published on the web site of the state or territory as described in § 98.43(g) and the web site of local lead agencies.

- a. Describe the state/territory procedure(s) for a provider to request the required background checks. If the process is different based on provider type, please include that in this description. If the process is different based on each background check component, please include that in this description. [Licensed Center - An employee of a licensed center who wants to become part of the childcare workforce must go through an interview process with the provider. If the provider is interested in hiring the person, the following documents should be requested: Local criminal record - This background provides information about local crimes. The job candidate applies](#)

for it through the internet or requests it at the Puerto Rico Police Headquarters in his or her area. In both cases the person must have a valid photo ID from the Department of Transportation and Public Works. National and state sex offender check (Law 300) This check provides information on sex crimes at the local and national level. The candidate must request it at the headquarters of his region, for which he must have a valid photo ID, two photographs, and a water or electricity bill to validate the address. Once the candidate delivers the two check mentioned above to the provider, the provider determines if wishes to hire the candidate. If they wish to hire, the provider sends the following documents to ACUDEN: Eligible supplier application - for this he completes an ACUDEN form and sends it along with two photographs. Consent for background check. - This document authorizes ACUDEN to check the background of individuals and make determinations based on the results. It also completes the document related to the history of abuse. This document is processed through the Family and Children's Administration, Central Registry, and the results are sent to ACUDEN. Fingerprinting is also coordinated for FBI background processing. This process is coordinated through a service provider contracted by ACUDEN and the results are delivered to ACUDEN. If the candidate possesses a full background check with no disqualifying offenses, the provider is notified of eligibility. In cases of disqualifying offenses, both the provider and the candidate are notified of their ineligibility. The candidate may begin working provisionally with the initial two background checks under the supervision of a person who has completed all background checks. Licensed home and non- family exempt home - in these homes the service provider needs to perform the same background procedure, but does not require the provider's intervention, the process is done directly by the provider with ACUDEN. The provider must supply: Eligible Provider Application - for this complete an ACUDEN form and submit it accompanied by two photographs. Consent for background check. - This document authorizes ACUDEN to check the background of individuals and make determinations based on the results. Authorization for direct deposit and a cancelled check or account certification to receive subsidy payments. Also complete the document related to the abuse history. This document is processed through the Administration for Families and Children, Central Registry, and the results are sent to ACUDEN. Local criminal history - This record provides information on local crimes. The job candidate applies for it through the Internet or requests it at the Puerto Rico Police Headquarters in his or her area. In both cases the person must have a valid photo ID from the Department of Transportation and Public Works. Puerto Rico doesn't have the infrastructure in place to run a state criminal history check with fingerprint. National and state sex offender registry (Law 300) This background information provides information on sex crimes at the local and national level. The candidate must request it in the police station of his region, for which he must have a valid photo ID, two photographs, a water or electricity bill to validate the address. The taking of fingerprints is also coordinated for the FBI background check process. This process is coordinated through a service provider contracted by ACUDEN and the results are delivered to ACUDEN. These background checks are taken on all adults 21 years of age and older residing in the provider's household. The family provider must complete all background checks prior to initiating service as the provider will not be under the supervision of any additional person.

- b. **The state/territory must ensure that fees charged for completing the background checks do not exceed the actual cost of processing and administration, regardless of whether they are conducted by the state/territory or a third-party vendor or contractor. What are the fees and how do you ensure that these fees do not exceed the actual cost of processing and administering the background checks? Lead Agencies can report that no fees are charged if applicable (98.43(f)).** The local criminal background check is free of charge. The FBI document is paid for by ACUDEN so there is no cost to the provider. The law 300 document has a minimum cost of \$1.50 in fees. There is no charge for the national and or state child abuse and neglect background check and sex offender check. The local criminal background check is also free of charge. The FBI criminal history check fee is paid by ACUDEN with no cost to the provider. The law 300 has a minimum cost of \$1.50 in fees.

- c. Describe the state/territory policy(ies) related to prospective staff members working on a provisional basis. Pending completion of all background check components in 98.43(b), the prospective staff member must be supervised at all times by an individual who received a qualifying result on a background check described in 98.43(b) within the past 5 years (98.43(c)(4)) and the prospective staff member must have completed and received satisfactory results on either the FBI fingerprint check or a fingerprint check of the state/territory criminal registry or repository in the state where the prospective staff member resides. Describe and include a citation for the Lead Agency's policy:
[The employee candidate may begin work provisionally if he/she has a negative state criminal background check and abuse history and the 300-law document \(national and local sexual assault history\) while the results of the other background checks are pending to be received. At all times he/she must be under the supervision of an employee who has completed the entire background process.](#)
- d. Describe the procedure for providers to request background checks for staff members that resided in another state within the previous 5 years. [The provider or applicant must submit documents from the appropriate state\(s\) such as local background checks for that state, sexual assault, and abuse. If the provider is unable to obtain any of these documents, ACUDEN contacts the Child Care agency of the referring state to request assistance in obtaining the information.](#)
- e. Describe the procedure to ensure each staff member completes all components of the background check process at least once during each 5-year period. If your state enrolls child care staff members in the FBI Rap Back Program or a state-based rap back program, please include that in this description. Note: An FBI Rap Back program only covers the FBI Fingerprint component of the background check. If child care staff members are enrolled in a state-based rap back, please indicate which background check components are covered by this service. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- f. Describe the procedure to ensure providers who are separated from employment for more than 180 consecutive days receive a full background check. [Personnel who have been retired from service for more than 180 days must undergo the fingerprinting process again.](#)
- g. Provide the website link that contains instructions on how child care providers should initiate background check requests for a prospective employee (98.43(g)).
<https://childcare.cuidoseguro.com/verificacion-de-antecedentes/>

5.5.3 Procedures for a Lead Agency to Respond to and Complete a Background Check.

Once a request has been initiated, the state shall carry out the request of a child care provider for a criminal background check as expeditiously as possible, but not to exceed 45 days after the date on which such request was submitted. The Lead Agency shall make the determination whether the prospective staff member is eligible for employment in a child care program (98.43(e)(1)). Lead Agencies must ensure the privacy of background checks by providing the results of the criminal background check to the requestor or identified recipient in a statement that indicates whether a child care staff member (including a prospective child care staff member or a family child care household member over the age of 18) is eligible or ineligible for employment, without revealing any documentation of criminal history or disqualifying crimes or other related information regarding the individual. In the following questions, describe the Lead Agency's procedures for conducting background checks. These responses should include:

- The name of the agency that conducts the investigation; include multiple names if multiple agencies are involved in different background check components
 - How the Lead Agency is informed of the results of each background check component
 - Who makes the determinations regarding the staff member's eligibility? Note: Disqualification decisions should align to the response provided in 5.5.7.
 - How the Lead Agency ensures that a background check request is carried out as quickly as possible and not more than 45 days after a request is submitted.
- a. Describe the procedures for conducting In-State Background Check requests and making a determination of eligibility. [Local criminal record - This record provides information on local crimes. The job candidate applies online or requests it at the Puerto Rico Police Headquarters of his/her area. In both cases the person must have a valid photo ID from the Department of Transportation and Public Works.](#)
 - b. If the procedure is different for National Background checks, including the name-based NCIC NSOR check and FBI fingerprint check, please describe here. [Law 300 - This backgrounder provides information on sex crimes at the local and national level. The candidate must request it in the police headquarters of his region, for the same the candidate must have a valid photo ID, two photographs, a water or electricity bill to validate the address.](#)
 - c. Describe the procedures for conducting Interstate Background Check requests and making a determination of eligibility. (Note this response should detail how a state conducts an interstate check for a provider who currently lives in their state or territory but has lived in another state(s) within the previous five years). [The employee provides the information and if they are unable to provide it, assistance is requested from the state childcare agency. When the interstate is clear we make the determination of eligibility for the applicant.](#)
 - d. Describe the procedure the Lead Agency has in place to make an eligibility determination in the event not all the components of the background check are completed within the required 45-day timeframe. [If the background check process is delayed for more than 45 days, the employee can work under the supervision of another employee who has fully completed the background process. Also the applicant must have complete the local criminal background check and national and local sex offender registry.](#)
 - e. Describe procedures for conducting a check when the state of residence is different than the state in which the staff member works. [Does not apply for Puerto Rico.](#)

5.5.4 State designation as a “Compact State” and participation in the National Fingerprint File program.

- a. “Compact States” are states that have ratified the National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact Act of 1998 in order to facilitate electronic information sharing for noncriminal justice purposes (such as employment) among the Federal Government and states. More information can be found here: <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/compact-council>. The Compact allows signatory states to disseminate its criminal history record information to other states for noncriminal justice purposes in accordance with the laws of the receiving state. For the most up-to-date Compact States and Territories map visit: <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/compact-council/maps>. Is your state or territory a Compact State?
- ☒ No
☐ Yes
- b. The National Fingerprint File (NFF) is a database of fingerprints, or other unique personal identification information relating to an arrested or charged individual, which is maintained by the FBI to provide positive fingerprint identification of record subjects. Only a state or territory that has ratified the Compact (a Compact State) may join the NFF program. An FBI fingerprint check satisfies the requirement to perform an interstate check of another state’s criminal history record repository if the responding state (where the child care staff member has resided within the past 5 years) participates in the NFF program. It is unnecessary to conduct both the FBI fingerprint check and the search of an NFF state’s criminal history record repository (refer to CCDF-ACF-PIQ-2017-01). For the most up-to-date NFF Participation map visit: <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/compact-council/maps>. Is your state or territory an NFF State?
- ☒ No
☐ Yes

5.5.5 Procedures for a Lead Agency to Respond to Interstate Background Checks:

- a. Interstate Criminal History Registry Check Procedures
- Provide a description of how the state or territory responds to interstate criminal history check requests from another state and whether there are any laws or policies that prevent the state from releasing certain criminal history information to an out-of-state entity for civil purpose (i.e., for purposes of determining employment eligibility). *We do not have laws that prohibit sharing information with other states. When other states need an interstate criminal background checks we bring them the information to contact the agency that provide the background check or we refer the application form to the agency that offers the result.*
- b. Interstate Sex Offender Registry Check Procedures
- Provide a description of how the state or territory responds to interstate sex offender history check requests from another state and whether there are any laws or policies that prevent the state from releasing certain sex offender information to an out-of-state entity for civil purpose (i.e., for purposes of determining employment eligibility). *If a sex offender history is needed for an interstate request, the employee requests it because there is no method for ACUDEN to request this information on behalf of an individual. There are no laws prohibiting the release of the information.*

c. Interstate Child Abuse and Neglect Registry Check Procedures

Provide a description of how the state or territory responds to interstate child abuse and neglect history check requests from another state and whether there are any laws or policies that prevent the state from releasing certain child abuse and neglect information to an out-of-state entity for civil purpose (i.e., for purposes of determining employment eligibility). [In the case of abuse or neglect history ACUDEN has an agreement with ADFAN for the processing of the same. ACUDEN receives the completed application form from the applicant and this is sent to ADFAN for processing. The results of such verification are sent to the requesting agency. There are no laws or regulations prohibiting the release of information.](#)

5.5.6 Consumer Education Website Links to Interstate Background Check Processes

Lead Agencies must have requirements, policies, and procedures in place to respond as expeditiously as possible to other States', Territories' and Tribes' requests for background checks in order to meet the 45-day timeframe (98.43(a)(1)(iii)). In addition, Lead Agencies are required to include on their consumer education website the process by which another Lead Agency may submit a background check request, along with all of the other background check policies and procedures (98.43 (g)).

State and Territory Lead Agencies are required to designate one page of their existing Consumer Education Website as a landing page for all interstate background check related processes and procedures pertaining to their own state. The purpose of having a dedicated interstate background check web page on the Lead Agency Consumer Education Website is to help state and territories implement the interstate background check requirements of the CCDBG Act (CCDF Consumer Education Website and Reports of Serious Injuries and Death (OMB #0970-0473)).

Check to certify that the required elements are included on the Lead Agency's consumer education website for each interstate background check component, and provide the direct URL/website link.

Note: The links provided below should be a part of your consumer education website identified in 2.3.11.

a. Interstate Criminal Background Check:

- ☒ i. Agency Name [Interstate Criminal Background Check](#)
- ☒ ii. Address [Puerto Rico Police 601 Ave Franklin Delano Roosevelt San Juan, 00936](#)
- ☒ iii. Phone Number [787-793-1234](#)
- ☐ iv. Email
- ☐ v. FAX
- ☒ vi. Website: <https://policia.pr.gov>
- ☐ vii. Instructions ((e.g. Does a portal/system account need to be created to make a request? What types of identification are needed? What types of payment is accepted? How can a provider appeal the results? How will forms will be accepted and FAQs?))

- ☒ viii. Forms [It is no possible to request this verification on-line](#)
- ☐ ix. Fees [It is no possible to request this verification on-line](#)
- ☐ x. Is the state a National Fingerprint File (NFF) state?
- ☐ xi. Is the state a National Crime Prevention and Privacy Compact State?
- ☐ xii. Direct URL/website link to where this information is posted. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

b. Interstate Sex Offender Registry (SOR) Check: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- ☐ i. Agency Name Puerto Rico Police
- ☐ ii. Address 601 Ave. Franklin D. Roosevelt San Juan, PR 00936
- ☐ iii. Phone Number 787793-1234
- ☐ iv. Email
- ☐ v. FAX
- ☐ vi. Website <https://policia.pr.gov>
- ☐ vii. Instructions ((e.g. Does a portal/system account need to be created to make a request? What types of identification are needed? What types of payment is accepted? How can a provider appeal the results? How will forms will be accepted and FAQs?))
- ☒ viii. Forms [It is no possible to request this verification on-line](#)
- ☒ ix. Fees [It is no possible to request this verification on-line](#)
- ☒ x. Direct URL/website link to where this information is posted. [It is no possible to request this verification on-line](#)

c. Interstate Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Registry Check:

- ☒ i. Agency Name – Family and Children’s Administration /Central Registry for Protective Case
- ☐ ii. Is the CAN check conducted through a County Administered Registry or Centralized Registry? Yes
- ☒ iii. Address Marginal Roosevelt #45 San Juan, Puerto Rico (Antiguo Edificio Etica Gubernamental)
- ☒ iv. Phone Number 787-294-4900
- ☒ v. Email registrocentral@familia.pr.gov
- ☐ vi. FAX
- ☒ vii. Website <https://adfan.pr.gov/pages/default.aspx>
- ☒ viii. Instructions ((e.g. Does a portal/system account need to be created to make a request? What types of identification is needed? What types of

payment is accepted? How can a provider appeal the results? How will forms will be accepted and FAQs?)

- ☐ ix. Forms Cannot be completed online
- ☐ x. Fees Cannot be completed online
- ☐ xi. Description of information that may be included in a response to a CAN registry check (including substantiated instances of child abuse and neglect accompanied by the State's definition of "substantiated" instances of child abuse and neglect. [A substantiated referral" means a determination from an investigation of abuse, institutional abuse, abuse by neglect and/or abuse by institutional negligence where there is sufficient evidence to determine that a child has been or is at risk.](#)
- xii.
- ☐ xiii. Direct URL/website link to where this information is posted. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

5.5.7 Child care staff members cannot be employed by a child care provider receiving CCDF subsidy funds if they refuse a background check, make materially false statements in connection with the background check, or are registered or required to be registered on the state or National Sex Offender Registry (98.43 (c)(1)(i-iii)). Potential staff members also cannot be employed by a provider receiving CCDF funds if they have been convicted of: a felony consisting of murder, child abuse or neglect, crimes against children, spousal abuse, crimes involving rape or sexual assault, kidnapping, arson, physical assault or battery, or—subject to an individual review (at the state/territory's option)—a drug-related offense committed during the preceding 5 years; a violent misdemeanor committed as an adult against a child, including the following crimes—child abuse, child endangerment, or sexual assault; or a misdemeanor involving child pornography (98.43(c)(1)(iv-v)).

- a. Does the state/territory disqualify child care staff members based on their conviction for any other crimes not specifically listed in 98.43(c)(i)?

☐ No

☒ Yes. If yes, describe other disqualifying crimes and provide the citation:

- Aggravated illegal appropriation, in all its modalities
- Extortion
- Fraud in construction works
- Fraud in the delivery of goods
- Undue intervention in contracting processes auctions in government operations
- Bribery, in all its modalities
- Aggravated bribery
- Offer of bribery
- Undue influence
- Crimes against public funds
- Preparation of false documents
- Forgery of documents
- Possession and transfer of forged documents
- Homicide in any of its degrees or forms
- Incitement to suicide
- Aggravated assault in any of its degrees or forms
- Mutilation
- Throwing acids at a person
- Rape in any of its modalities
- Seduction
- Sodomy
- Bestiality
- Dishonest exposures
- Obscene propositions
- Pyroxenes, ruffians or trade in persons
- Incest
- Restriction of freedom in any of its degrees or modalities.
- Abandonment of minors
- Theft of minors
- Illegal deprivation of custody
- Adoption in exchange for money
- Perversion of minors
- Public begging by minors
- Robbery
- Extortion
- Abuse to the detriment of minors and incapable persons
- Imposture
- Arson in any of its degrees or modalities.

- b. Describe how the Lead Agency notifies the applicant about their eligibility to work in a child care program. This description should detail how the Lead Agency ensures the privacy of background checks. Note: The Lead Agency may not publicly release the results of individual background checks. (98.43(e)(2)(iii)). If the employee is eligible, he/she is notified by written letter. If the employee is not eligible, two communications are issued. One of these communications is sent to the provider, i.e., the employer. The employer is only informed that the employee is ineligible and therefore cannot be in the presence of the children and cannot work at the childcare center regardless of the funds from which his or her salary will be paid.
- c. Describe whether the state/territory has a review process for individuals disqualified due to a felony drug offense to determine if that individual is still eligible for employment (98.43 (e)(2-

- 4). There is no specific appeal process for drug-related offenses. This is done through the regular appeals process.

5.5.8 Appeals Processes for Background Checks

States and territories shall provide for a process by which a child care program staff member (including a prospective child care staff member) may appeal the results of a background check to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in a staff member's background report. The state or territory shall ensure that:

- The child care staff member is provided with information related to each disqualifying crime in a report, along with information/notice on the opportunity to appeal
 - A child care staff member will receive clear instructions about how to complete the appeals process for each background check component if the child care staff member wishes to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in such member's background report
 - If the staff member files an appeal, the state or territory will attempt to verify the accuracy of the information challenged by the child care staff member, including making an effort to locate any missing disposition information related to the disqualifying crime
 - The appeals process is completed in a timely manner for any appealing child care staff member
 - Each child care staff member shall receive written notice of the decision. In the case of a negative determination, the decision should indicate 1) the state's efforts to verify the accuracy of information challenged by the child care staff member, 2) any additional appeals rights available to the child care staff member, and 3) information on how the individual can correct the federal or state records at issue in the case. (98.43(e)(3))
 - The Lead Agency must work with other agencies that are in charge of background check information and results (such as the Child Welfare office and the State Identification Bureau), to ensure the appeals process is conducted in accordance with the Act.
- a. What is the procedure for each applicant to appeal or challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in the background check report? If there are different appeal process procedures for each component of the check, please provide that in this description, including information on which state agency is responsible for handling each type of appeal. Note: The FBI Fingerprint Check, State Criminal Fingerprint, and NCIC NSOR checks are usually conducted by a state's Identification Bureau and **may** have different appeal processes than agencies that conduct the state CAN and state SOR checks. The appeal process has two alternatives. If the complaint is about ACUDEN's mishandling of the background information or a misinterpretation or misapplication of the disqualifying offenses, the process is done through the Department of the Family's Adjudication Board. The adjudicatory process must be completed in a period not exceeding fifteen (15) days and may be sent via email, mail or may be delivered to any Department of the Family's local or regional office. On the other hand, if there is a complaint regarding the outcome of the background check, the applicant must make a complaint with the agency that issue the result.
- b. If the appeals process is different for interstate checks, what is the procedure for each applicant to appeal or challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in the background report for interstate checks? There is NO difference with the ordinary appeals process

- c. **Interstate Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Registry Check:** Since it is the Department of the Family that issues this result, the appeal process is done through the Department of the Family's Adjudicatory Board. The appeal process must be completed in a period no longer than fifteen (15) days and can be sent via email, mail or can be delivered to any local or regional office of the Department of the Family.

5.6 Exemptions for Relative Providers

States and territories have the option to exempt relatives (defined in CCDF regulations as grandparents, great-grandparents, siblings if living in a separate residence, aunts, and uncles (98.42(c)) from certain health and safety requirements. Note: This exception applies if the individual cares only for relative children.

Check and describe where applicable the policies that the Lead Agency has regarding exemptions for eligible relative providers for the following health and safety requirements. The description should include the health and safety requirements relatives are exempt from, if applicable, as well as which of the federally defined relatives the exemption applies to.

5.6.1 Licensing Requirements (as described in Section 5.1)

- ☒ a. Relative providers are exempt from all licensing requirements.
- ☐ b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of licensing requirements. Describe. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ c. Relative providers must fully comply with all licensing requirements.

5.6.2 Health and Safety Standards (as described in Section 5.2 and 5.3)

- ☒ a. Relative providers are exempt from all health and safety standard requirements
- ☐ b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of health and safety standard requirements. Describe. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ c. Relative providers must fully comply with all health and safety standard requirements.

5.6.3 Health and Safety Training (as described in Section 5.3)

- ☐ a. Relative providers are exempt from all health and safety training requirements.
- ☒ b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of all health and safety training requirements. Describe. [A basic orientation about health and safety in the home is provided by a written document. A basic orientation about health and safety in the home is provided by a written document.](#)
- ☐ c. Relative providers must fully comply with all health and safety training requirements.

5.6.4 Monitoring and Enforcement (as described in Section 5.4)

- ☒ a. Relative providers are exempt from all monitoring and enforcement requirements.
- ☐ b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of monitoring and enforcement requirements. Describe. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ c. Relative providers must fully comply with all monitoring and enforcement requirements.

5.6.5 Background Checks (as described in Section 5.5)

- ☒ a. Relative providers are exempt from all background check requirements.
- ☐ b. Relative providers are exempt from a portion of background check requirements. If checked, identify the background check components that relatives must complete:

- ☐ i. Criminal registry or repository using fingerprints in the current state of residency
 - ☐ ii. Sex offender registry or repository in the current state of residency
 - ☐ iii. Child abuse and neglect registry and database check in the current state of residency
 - ☐ iv. FBI fingerprint check
 - ☐ v. National Crime Information Center (NCIC) National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR) name based search.
 - ☐ vi. Criminal registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past five years.
 - ☐ vii. Sex offender registry or repository in any other state where the individual has resided in the past five years.
 - ☐ viii. Child abuse and neglect registry or data base in any other state where the individual has resided in the past five years.
- ☐ c. Relative providers must fully comply with all background check requirements.

6 Recruit and Retain a Qualified and Effective Child Care Workforce

This section covers the state or territory framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education (98.44(a)); provides a description of strategies used to strengthen the business practices of child care providers (98.16(z)) and addresses early learning and developmental guidelines.

Lead Agencies are required to reserve and use a portion of their Child Care and Development Fund program expenditures for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care (98.53). This section addresses the quality improvement activities implemented by the Lead Agency related to the support of the child care workforce and the development and implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines. It asks Lead Agencies to describe the measurable indicators of progress used to evaluate state/territory progress in improving the quality of child care services. (98.53 (f)) in either of these two areas.

States and territories are required to describe their framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education for caregivers, teachers, and directors, including those working in school-age care (98.44(a)). This framework is part of a broader systematic approach building on health and safety training (as described in section 5) within a state/territory. States and territories must incorporate their knowledge and application of health and safety standards, early learning guidelines, responses to challenging behavior, and the engagement of families. States and territories are required to establish a progression of professional development opportunities to improve the knowledge and skills of CCDF providers (658E(c)(2)(G)). To the extent practicable, professional development should be appropriate to work with a population of children of different ages, English-language learners, children with disabilities, and Native Americans (98.44(b)(2)(iv)). Training and professional development is one of the options that states and territories have for investing their CCDF quality funds (658G(b)(1)).

6.1 Professional Development Framework

- 6.1.1 Each state or territory must describe their professional development framework for training, professional development, and post-secondary education for caregivers, teachers and directors in programs that serve children of all ages. This framework should be developed in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care or similar coordinating body. The framework should include these components:
- (1) professional standards and competencies, (2) career pathways, (3) advisory structures, (4) articulation, (5) workforce information, and (6) financing (98.44(a)(3)). Flexibility is provided on the strategies, breadth, and depth with which states and territories will develop and implement their framework.

- a. Describe how the state/territory's framework for training and professional development addresses the following required elements:

- i. State/territory professional standards and competencies. Describe:

At present Puerto Rico is in the process of refining what will become the statewide framework of professional standards and competencies which may delineate the core body of knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions early childhood educators must demonstrate to effectively promote young children's well-being, development and learning. A draft was produced by the previous SACs and

the finalized framework will be the result of current PDG B-5 project efforts. Meanwhile, the Child Care and Development program professional development plan uses as a reference NAEYC's professional development standards and competencies and Caring for Our Children National Standards to focus in 9 area: Child early growth, development and learning; social-emotional development; content knowledge and intentional integration in curriculum planning and teaching; learning and development environments; developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate practices; child observation, documentation, screening, ongoing assessment and referral; family partnerships and community connections; health, safety and nutrition; professionalism and

- ii. **Career pathways. Describe:** ACUDEN will engage partners in developing a conceptual model and framework of career pathways, including definitions, that focuses on: the current workforce needs of employers and, the education and training needs of individuals to progress and be successful on the career they select. The framework should assist individuals in making career choices and plans and promote systems change to create career options, provide clear transitions, strong supports, and other elements critical to the success of participants, along the pathway. Career pathways change as the field of work changes. The Child Care and Development program's professional development plan is focused on insuring responsiveness to statutory, regulatory and programmatic changes in the early care and education field that require the ongoing development of knowledge and skills to be successful and thus maintain service quality. The program responded to the enactment of PL 173-2016, the new legislation for licensing of care, development and learning centers which established higher staff qualifications which somewhat suggests a career pathway for early childhood professionals hired as:
Director – A Bachelor's degree complemented with the minimum required coursework for an early childhood education specialization with a current CDA, relevant to the developmental level of the children served.
Teacher – A Bachelor's degree in education complemented with a current CDA, relevant to the developmental level of the children served or have a current Teacher Certificate relevant to the preschool age group, issued by the Department of Education. Teachers having an early childhood or preschool education specialization that includes infants and toddlers are exempt from the CDA requirement. **Assistant Teachers** - A minimum of high school graduation complemented with a current CDA, relevant to the developmental level of the children served. The program supports subsidized programs without the financial capacity to comply with the minimum CDA requirement through incentives, orientation support and collaboration agreements with higher education institutions, technical colleges and the Office for the Administration and Transformation of the Government of Puerto Rico Human Resources (OATRM) to offer the required coursework for the CDA credential by the Council for Professional Recognition (CPR). The newly created ACUDEN Academy will strive to funnel all the required staff and provider training opportunities in order to document successful participation that will constitute evidence of progress through a career path.
- iii. **Advisory structure. Describe:** Puerto Rico's SAC is in the process of reorganization and will soon be reactivated. Previously active SACs have addressed professional standards and competencies as a priority, establishing committees to advise on the matter as well as on professional development opportunities. At present, the multisectoral group convened by the PDG B-5 project have provided the most current advise. In lieu a formal advisory structure, the Lead Agency usually receives advise from critical education entities such as the Institute for Developmental Disabilities of the Public Health School at the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences campus, the *Avanzando Juntos* (Early intervention-Part C) program of the Department of Health, the Education school of the University of Puerto Rico and other relevant organizations.
- iv. **Articulation. Describe:** Articulation of professional preparation and development offers within the overall system has been a challenge. It is expected that the career pathways model and framework will promote better articulation between the components of the system.
- v. **Workforce information. Describe:** The professional standards and competencies framework project may include a statewide registry, that is, an online database that tracks verified professional development and employment experience of its members. At present, information from the child care program workforce is obtained through different means. The Health and Safety

Form collects information from providers participating in the child care Voucher System. Proposals submitted by the child care providers through contracts for the delegation of funds include evidence of all staff qualifications which is later verified through on site visits.

- vi. **Financing.** Describe: The Lead agency will articulate the fiscal resources dedicated to quality improvement of CCDF and administers to continue building the comprehensive statewide professional development system.

- b. The following are optional elements, or elements that should be implemented to the extent practicable, in the training and professional development framework.

- ☒ i. Continuing education unit trainings and credit-bearing professional development to the extent practicable. Describe: The identification of credit-bearing as well as continuing education and training opportunities are considered integral elements of the conceptualization of the statewide professional development framework and career pathway.
- ☒ ii. Engagement of training and professional development providers, including higher education, in aligning training and educational opportunities with the state/territory's framework. Describe: Discussions among with representatives of institutions and organizations that provide credit-bearing as well as continuing education and training opportunities such as universities, colleges and the Office for the Administration and Transformation of the Government of Puerto Rico Human Resources (OATRM), includes the need for alignment of all educational efforts to the territory's professional development framework and career pathway. The Lead agency currently works with these entities to provide all types of opportunities for its early childhood staff and child care providers. This includes financial support for the CDA credential preparation requirements.
- ☐ iii. Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

- 6.1.2 Describe how the state/territory developed its professional development framework in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (if applicable) or similar coordinating body if there is no SAC that addresses the professional development, training, and education of child care providers and staff.

Puerto Rico's SAC is in the process of reorganization and will soon be reactivated. Previously active SACs have addressed professional standards and competencies as a priority, establishing committees to advise on the matter as well as on professional development opportunities. At present, the multisectoral group convened by the PDG B-5 project have provided the most current advise.

- 6.1.3 Describe how the framework improves the quality, diversity, stability, and retention of caregivers, teachers, and directors (98.44(a)(7)). *Click or tap here to enter text.*

6.2 Training and Professional Development Requirements

The Lead Agency must describe how its established health and safety requirements for pre-service or orientation training and ongoing professional development requirements—as described in Section 5 for caregivers, teachers, and directors in CCDF programs—align, to the extent practicable, with the state/territory professional development framework. These requirements must be designed to enable child care providers to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children and to improve the knowledge and skills of the child care workforce. Such requirements shall be applicable to child care providers caring for children receiving CCDF funds across the entire age span, from birth through age 12

(658E(c)(2)(G)). Ongoing training and professional development should be accessible and appropriate to the setting and age of the children served (98.44(b)(2)).

6.2.1 Describe how the state/territory incorporates into training and professional development opportunities:

- the knowledge and application of its early learning and developmental guidelines (where applicable);
- its health and safety standards (as described in section 5);
- and social-emotional/behavioral and mental health intervention models for young children, which can include positive behavior intervention and support models that reduce the likelihood of suspension and expulsion of children (as described in Section 2 of the Pre-Print) (98.44(b)).

The Child Care Program's professional development plan addresses the knowledge and skills that every professional involved in early care and education, serving children across the age span and at different settings, must have to ensure their success and that of their families. Staff and providers receive training on topics related to the Creative Curriculum educational objectives, which are aligned to the territory's early learning and developmental standards/guidelines. These address learning and development objectives in the following domains and content areas: social-emotional, physical, cognitive, language, literacy, mathematics, science and technology, social studies, the arts and English-language acquisition. Specific attention is given to promoting children's socio-emotional development and the use of appropriate behavior management practices through the implementation of training on a specific curriculum adaptation based on the CSEFEL's Pyramid Model.

In addition, the program provides training on required topics to safeguard children's health and safety guided by the Caring for Our Children National Standards, including preventive health practices, accident prevention and emergency management, among others:

Incident log

Preventing infectious diseases

Prevention of sudden deaths and appropriate practices when infants sleep

Procedure for the administration of medications, including the parent or caregiver consent requirement

Process for allergy emergency care and prevention

Plan for handling shear wounds, electrical contacts, or accidents in vehicles or bodies of water

Emergency plan for natural or man-made disasters.

Necessary precautions when transporting children

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation process

Handling and storage of hazardous materials.

Process for the proper disposal of bio contaminating materials

Medical emergency management processes.

The program also orients staff on the established protocol of non-expulsion of children

6.2.2 Describe how the state/territory's training and professional development are accessible to providers supported through Indian tribes or tribal organizations receiving CCDF funds (as applicable) (98.44(b)(2)(vi)). *Not applicable*

6.2.3 States/territories are required to facilitate participation of child care providers with limited English proficiency and disabilities in the subsidy system (98.16 (dd)). Describe how the state/territory will recruit and facilitate the participation of providers in the subsidy system:

- a. with limited English proficiency. During the service promotion and child care provider recruitment process, those with language limitations are identified in order to make the necessary accommodations, offer technological assistance and have specialized personnel, if necessary, and thus insure access and full participation.

- b. who have disabilities. During the service promotion and child care provider recruitment process, those with disabilities that are able to provide services are identified in order to make the necessary accommodations, offer technological assistance and have specialized personnel, if necessary, and thus insure access and full participation. Family child care network providers are also encouraged to recruit and assist those in need of special assistance.
- 6.2.4 Describe how the state/territory's training and professional development requirements are appropriate, to the extent practicable, for child care providers who care for children receiving child care subsidies, including children of different age groups (such as specialized credentials for providers who care for infants and/or school-age children); English-language learners; children with developmental delays and disabilities; and Native Americans, including Indians as defined in Section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (including Alaska Natives) and Native Hawaiians (98.44(b)(2)(iv)). The Child Care Program's professional development plan addresses the knowledge and skills that every professional involved in early care and education must have to ensure success in children and their families. This plan includes topics related to children's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development, articulated with Puerto Rico's early learning and development standards. The specific training and professional development requirements are guided by the Creative Curriculum's 10 learning and development domains and content areas, NAEYC's developmentally appropriate practices and the National Health and Safety Standards established in Caring for Our Children. Additionally, our focus is building competencies in 9 areas: Child early growth, development and learning; social-emotional development; content knowledge and intentional integration in curriculum planning and teaching; learning and development environments; developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate practices; child observation, documentation, screening, ongoing assessment and referral; family partnerships and community connections; health, safety and nutrition; professionalism and ethics. Special attention is given to insuring that topics address developmentally-appropriate practices for different age groups and the special needs of children with disabilities and children learning a second language, among others.
- 6.2.5 The Lead Agency must provide training and technical assistance (TA) to providers and appropriate Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff on identifying and serving children and families experiencing homelessness (658E(c)(3)(B)(i)).
- a. Describe the state/territory's training and TA efforts for providers in identifying and serving children and their families experiencing homelessness (relates to question 3.2.2). Providers receive training and technical assistance from auxiliary coordinators and the Central Office for the proper management of homeless applicants. They are trained on the exceptions applicable in the eligibility process to provide child care.
 - b. Describe the state/territory's training and TA efforts for Lead Agency (or designated entity) staff in identifying and serving children and their families experiencing homelessness (connects to question 3.3.6). The Lead Agency has an administrative agreement with the Office of the Multi-Sectoral Council in Support of the Homeless Population, which identifies homeless families in the community and coordinates a variety of service, including child care. Upon receipt of their referral of homeless families, ACUDEN assesses their eligibility and offers them the necessary services. The Office also provides training to Lead Agency staff on the case management of homeless families and engages in discussions about family needs during meetings with the regional auxiliary coordinators and staff, as needed.

- 6.2.6 Lead Agencies must develop and implement strategies to strengthen the business practices of child care providers to expand the supply and to improve the quality of child care services (98.16 (z)). Describe the state/territory's strategies to strengthen providers' business practices, which can include training and/or TA efforts.
- a. Describe the strategies that the state/territory is developing and implementing for strengthening child care providers' business practices. *The Lead Agency has an established agreement with the Puerto Rico Economic and Business Development Department (DDEC) to provide professional development that strengthens child care providers' business practices. These trainings will be included in the ACUDEN Academy Project. In addition, orientation and support is provided to participate in training opportunities offered by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Community Financial Advisors organization (Asesores Financieros Comunitarios), as needed.*

- b. Check the topics addressed in the state/territory's strategies for strengthening child care providers' business practices. Check all that apply.
- ☒ i. Fiscal management
 - ☒ ii. Budgeting
 - ☒ iii. Recordkeeping
 - ☐ iv. Hiring, developing, and retaining qualified staff
 - ☒ v. Risk management
 - ☐ vi. Community relationships
 - ☐ vii. Marketing and public relations
 - ☐ viii. Parent-provider communications, including who delivers the training, education, and/or technical assistance
 - ☐ ix. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

6.3 Supporting Training and Professional Development of the Child Care Workforce with CCDF Quality Funds

Lead Agencies can invest CCDF quality funds in the training, professional development, and post-secondary education of the child care workforce as part of a progression of professional development activities, such as those included at 98.44 of the CCDF Rule, and those included in the activities to improve the quality of child care also addressed in Section 7 (98.53(a)(1)).

6.3.1 Training and professional development of the child care workforce.

- a. In the table below, describe which content is included in training and professional development activities and how an entity is funded to address this topic. Then identify which types of providers are included in these activities. Check all that apply.

What content is included under each of these training topics and what type of funds are used for this activity?	Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?				
	<i>Licensed center-based</i>	<i>License exempt center-based</i>	<i>Licensed family child care home</i>	<i>License-exempt family child care home</i>	<i>In-home care (care in the child's own home)</i>
i. Promoting the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children, including those efforts related to nutrition and physical activity, using scientifically based, developmentally appropriate, and age-appropriate strategies (98.53 (a)(1)(i)(A)).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What content is included under each of these training topics and what type of funds are used for this activity?	Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?				
	<i>Licensed center-based</i>	<i>License exempt center-based</i>	<i>Licensed family child care home</i>	<i>License-exempt family child care home</i>	<i>In-home care (care in the child's own home)</i>
<p>Describe the content and funding: Teachers and assistants are trained to use the Creative Curriculum (Curriculo Creativo). The curriculum is certified and based on developmental investigations and the early learning guidelines. The training include appriates activities for each developmental stages. These activities include areas as socioemotional , physical and cognitive development. The quality funds are use.</p>					
<p>ii. Implementing behavior management strategies, including positive behavior interventions and support models that promote positive social-emotional development and the mental health of young children and that reduce challenging behaviors, including a reduction in expulsions of preschool-age children from birth to age five for such behaviors. (See also section 2.4.5.) (98.53(a)(1)(iii)).</p> <p>Describe the content and funding: ACUDEN provide trainings based on the CSEFEL Socioemotional Model. The teachers are trained to learn how to manage the children behavior in the classroom. Also they learn strategies to promote positive behavior to avoid expulsions of children. Mental health consultants are available to assist staff and to intervene with the child and parents as needed. Quality funds are use with this purpose.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>iii. Engaging parents and families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to expand their knowledge, skills, and capacity to become meaningful partners in supporting their children's</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What content is included under each of these training topics and what type of funds are used for this activity?	Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?				
	<i>Licensed center-based</i>	<i>License exempt center-based</i>	<i>Licensed family child care home</i>	<i>License-exempt family child care home</i>	<i>In-home care (care in the child's own home)</i>
<p>positive development. (98.53(a)(1)(iv)).</p> <p>Describe the content and funding: Click or tap here to enter text.</p>					
<p>iv. Implementing developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, and evidence-based curricula, and designing learning environments that are aligned with state/territory early learning and developmental standards (98.15 (a)(9)).</p> <p>Describe the content and funding: Click or tap here to enter text.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>v. Providing onsite or accessible comprehensive services for children and developing community partnerships that promote families' access to services that support their children's learning and development.</p> <p>Describe the content and funding: Click or tap here to enter text.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>vi. Using data to guide program evaluation to ensure continuous improvement 98.53(a)(1)(ii)).</p> <p>Describe the content and funding: Click or tap here to enter text.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>vii. Caring for children of families in geographic areas with significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment.</p> <p>Describe the content and funding:</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What content is included under each of these training topics and what type of funds are used for this activity?	Which type of providers are included in these training and professional development activities?				
	<i>Licensed center-based</i>	<i>License exempt center-based</i>	<i>Licensed family child care home</i>	<i>License-exempt family child care home</i>	<i>In-home care (care in the child's own home)</i>
Click or tap here to enter text.					
viii. Caring for and supporting the development of children with disabilities and developmental delays 98.53 (a)(1)(i)(B). Describe the content and funding: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ix. Supporting the positive development of school-age children (98.53(a)(1)(iii). Describe the content and funding: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
x. Other. Describe: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- b. Check how the state/territory connects child care providers with available federal and state/territory financial aid or other resources to pursue post-secondary education relevant for the early childhood and school-age workforce and then identify which providers are eligible for this activity. Check all that apply. N/A

		<i>Licensed center- based</i>	<i>License- exempt center- based</i>	<i>Licensed family child care home</i>	<i>License exempt family child care home</i>	<i>In-home care (care in the child's own home)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	i. Coaches, mentors, consultants, or other specialists available to support access to post-secondary training, including financial aid and academic counseling.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	ii. Statewide or territory-wide, coordinated, and easily accessible clearinghouse (i.e., an online calendar, a listing of opportunities) of relevant post-secondary education opportunities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	iii. Financial awards such as scholarships, grants, loans, or reimbursement for expenses and/or training, from the state/territory to complete post-secondary education.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	iv. Other. Describe: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6.3.2 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 6.3 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. [Pasitos, QIRS, provided the indicators to evaluate progress](#)

6.4 Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines

6.4.1 States and territories are required to develop, maintain, or implement early learning and developmental guidelines that are appropriate for children in a forward progression from birth to kindergarten entry (i.e., birth to three, three to five, birth to five), describing what children should know and be able to do and covering the essential domains of early childhood development. These early learning and developmental guidelines are to be used statewide and territory-wide by child care providers and in the development and implementation of training and professional development (658E(c)(2)(T)). The required essential domains for these guidelines are cognition, including language arts and mathematics; social, emotional, and physical development; and approaches toward learning (98.15(a)(9)). At the option of the state/territory, early learning and developmental guidelines for out-of-school time may be developed. Note: States and territories may use the quality set-aside, discussed in section 7, to improve on the development or implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines.

- a. Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines address the following requirements:
 - i. Are research-based. *Current early learning and developmental standards/guidelines were developed using as reference other state and territories ELD guidelines and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework.*
 - ii. Developmentally appropriate. *Current early learning and developmental standards/guidelines were developed using as reference ELD guidelines from other state and territories and the Head Start Child Outcomes Framework. The NAEYC developmentally-appropriate practices were also consulted.*
 - iii. Culturally and linguistically appropriate. *Click or tap here to enter text.*
 - iv. Aligned with kindergarten entry. *The development of the current early learning and developmental standards/guidelines was led by the Puerto Rico Department of Education's Early Childhood Program, which oversees the Kindergarten program as well.*
 - v. Appropriate for all children from birth to kindergarten entry. *Representatives the diverse early childhood ecosystem (ex. PreK, Head Start, child care) participated in the development of the current early learning and developmental standards/guidelines. The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework was used as a reference.*
 - vi. Implemented in consultation with the educational agency and the State Advisory Council or similar coordinating body. *The development of the current early learning and developmental standards/guidelines was led by the Puerto Rico Department of Education's Early Childhood Program with the participation of the State Advisory Council Executive Director and members and representatives from the diverse early childhood ecosystem. It included teachers and educational supervisors, specialists and coaches.*
- b. Describe how the required domains are included in the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines. Responses for "other" are optional.
 - i. Cognition, including language arts and mathematics. *Included. Birth to Five. Cognition, language arts and logical-mathematical reasoning*
 - ii. Social development. *Included. Birth to Five*
 - iii. Emotional development. *Included. Birth to Five*
 - iv. Physical development. *Included. Birth to Five*
 - v. Approaches toward learning. *Included. Birth to Five*

- vi. Describe how other optional domains are included, if any:
[Creative development \(Birth to Five\). Scientific reasoning and social studies \(Preschool\).](#)
- c. Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are updated and include the date first issued and/or the frequency of updates.
[The Puerto Rico Department of Education is the agency responsible by law to develop and updated the territory's early learning guidelines/standards. They were first developed after 2002 and have been updated 4 times since then. Last time was in 2016. A new revision is forthcoming](#)
- d. If applicable, discuss the state process for the adoption, implementation, and continued improvement of state out-of-school time standards. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- e. Provide the Web link to the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines and if available, the school-age guidelines. [A Web link to the Puerto Rico's current early learning and developmental guidelines is no longer available. The Lead Agency expects it to be by the end of year 2021, when the revised ones are published.](#)

6.4.2 CCDF funds cannot be used to develop or implement an assessment for children that:

- Will be the primary or sole basis to determine a child care provider ineligible to participate in the CCDF

- Will be used as the primary or sole basis to provide a reward or sanction for an individual provider
- Will be used as the primary or sole method for assessing program effectiveness
- Will be used to deny children eligibility to participate in the CCDF (658E(c)(2)(T)(ii)(I); 98.15(a)(2))

Describe how the state/territory's early learning and developmental guidelines are used.

[The Puerto Rico Early Learning Standards are used to align curriculum objectives and assessment to guide teaching practices and improve the child care program quality](#)

- 6.4.3 If quality funds are used to develop, maintain, or implement early learning and development guidelines, describe the measurable indicators that will be used to evaluate the state/territory's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services and the data on the extent to which the state/territory has met these measures (98.53(f)(3)). [No quality funds will be used to develop, maintain, or implement early learning and development guidelines. Nevertheless, ACUDEN's child care staff will collaborate with the Puerto Rico forthcoming revision of the territory's guidelines/standards](#)

7 Support Continuous Quality Improvement

Lead Agencies are required to use a portion of their Child Care and Development Fund program expenditures for activities designed to improve the quality of child care services and to increase parental options for and access to high-quality child care (98.53). The quality activities should be aligned with a statewide or territory-wide assessment of the state's or territory's need to carry out such services and care.

States and territories are required to report on these quality improvement investments through CCDF in three ways:

1. In the CCDF Plan, the ACF 118, states and territories will describe the types of activities supported by quality investments over the 3-year period (658G(b); 98.16(j)).
2. In the annual expenditure report, the ACF-696, ACF will collect data on how much CCDF funding is spent on quality activities. This report will be used to determine compliance with the required quality and infant and toddler spending requirements (658G(d)(1); 98.53(f)).
3. For each year of the Plan period, states and territories will submit a Quality Progress Report, the ACF 218, that will include a description of activities funded by quality expenditures and the measures used by the state/territory to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory (658G(d); 98.53(f)).

States and territories must fund efforts in at least one of the following 10 activities:

- Supporting the training and professional development of the child care workforce (Addressed in Section 6)
- Improving on the development or implementation of early learning and developmental guidelines (Addressed in Section 6)
- Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system

or other systems of quality improvement for child care providers and services

- Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers
- Establishing or expanding a statewide system of child care resource and referral services
- Supporting compliance with state/territory requirements for licensing, inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety (as described in section 5)
- Evaluating the quality of child care programs in the state/territory, including evaluating how programs positively impact children
- Supporting providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation
- Supporting the development or adoption of high-quality program standards related to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development
- Performing other activities to improve the quality of child care services, as long as outcome measures relating to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry are possible

Throughout this Plan, states and territories will describe the types of quality improvement activities where CCDF investments are being made, including but not limited to, quality set-aside funds, and will describe the measurable indicators of progress used to evaluate state/territory progress in improving the quality of child care services for each expenditure (98.53(f)). These activities can benefit infants and toddlers through school-age populations, and all categories of care. It is important that while Lead Agencies have the flexibility to define “high quality” and develop strategies and standards to support their definition, Lead Agencies should consider how that definition and those strategies for different provider types reflect and acknowledge their unique differences and how quality varies in different settings, including family child care and small care settings as well as child care centers.

This section covers the quality activities needs assessment, quality improvement activities, and indicators of progress for each of the activities undertaken in the state or territory.

7.1 Quality Activities Needs Assessment for Child Care Services

- 7.1.1 Lead Agencies must invest in quality activities based on an assessment of the state/territory's needs to carry out those activities. Lead Agencies have the flexibility to design an assessment of their quality activities that best meet their needs, including how often they do the assessment. Describe your state/territory assessment process, including the frequency of assessment (658G(a)(1); 98.53(a)). The Lead Agency recently conducted the needs assessment for the new Preschool Development Grant B-5 project, which included an assessment of the quality of early childhood services. Interviewed leaders of opinion mentioned the following as essential elements of a quality program: qualified and committed staff, use of evidence-based best practices, monitoring evaluation, having recurring funding. Additionally, some of the best practices mentioned were: 1) a holistic-approach to child development and learning; 2) encouraging parent engagement; 3) focusing on early intervention. Among the areas most in need of quality improvement mentioned were: bureaucratic processes that limit timely access to services, particularly for children with special needs, hiring staff without true commitment to children and their families and limited access to professional development opportunities. Additionally, the Child Care and Development Program uses the data collected from the application of the QRIS (Pasitos) ratings to assess those center providers who voluntarily participate in the program's quality assessment system. Its assessment instrument standards are organized within 10 basic dimensions that guide the observations: Relationships, Daily Activity Plans to Foster Child Development, Teaching, Child Assessment, Health and Safety, Teachers, Families, Community Relations, Physical Environments, Leadership and Administration. The result of the assessment exercise provides the information needed to determine the level (defined as a "step") of the centers compliance with each standard, on a scale from one to five. Note: The Lead Agency is currently considering updating its QRIS through the PDG B-5 project. The program also regularly conducts an assessment of compliance with its health and safety and child development standards, through its Health and Safety and Quality and Child Development Units. These assessments include quality criteria. All of these assessments guide decision-making on priorities for quality activities and professional development opportunities. This will be enhanced by the proposed creation of an integrated data system through PDG B-5 funds to support performance measurement, cross-agency data use and analysis for policy update and continuous program improvement.
- 7.1.2 Describe the findings of the assessment and if any overarching goals for quality improvement were identified. If applicable, include a direct URL/website link for any available evaluation or research related to the findings. Within the general goal of achieving quality lies the objective of the Lead Agency that all providers meet the requirements set forth in the state licensing law and regulations. These ensure safe and healthy child care environments and developmentally appropriate practices. The most common assessment findings are related to health and safety facility issues for which providers require technical and economic assistance to meet or exceed licensing requirements. Other provider needs revolve around curriculum identification and implementation, training and technical assistance on specialized topics and support to obtain the CDA credential or continuing education.

7.2 Use of Quality Funds

- 7.2.1 Check the quality improvement activities in which the state/territory is investing.

Quality Improvement Activity	Type of funds used for this activity. Check all that apply.	Other funds: describe	Related Section
a. Supporting the training and professional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds	PDG B-5	6.3

Quality Improvement Activity	Type of funds used for this activity. Check all that apply.	Other funds: describe	Related Section
development of the child care workforce as discussed in 6.2.	<input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds		
b. Developing, maintaining, or implementing early learning and developmental guidelines.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds <input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds	Click or tap here to enter text.	6.4
c. Developing, implementing, or enhancing a tiered quality rating and improvement system.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds <input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds	PDG B-5	7.3
d. Improving the supply and quality of child care services for infants and toddlers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds <input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds	Click or tap here to enter text.	7.4
e. Establishing or expanding a statewide system of CCR&R services, as discussed in 1.7.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds <input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds	PDG B-5	7.5
f. Facilitating Compliance with State Standards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds <input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds	Click or tap here to enter text.	7.6
g. Evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care services within the state/territory.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds <input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds	Click or tap here to enter text.	7.7
h. Accreditation Support	<input type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds	Click or tap here to enter text.	7.8

Quality Improvement Activity	Type of funds used for this activity. Check all that apply.	Other funds: describe	Related Section
	<input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds		
i. Supporting state/territory or local efforts to develop high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds <input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds	Click or tap here to enter text.	7.9
j. Other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of child care services and which measurement of outcomes related to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry is possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> i. CCDF funds <input type="checkbox"/> ii. State general funds	Click or tap here to enter text.	7.10

7.3 Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) or Another System of Quality Improvement

Lead Agencies may respond in this section based on other systems of quality improvement, even if not called a QRIS, as long as the other quality improvement system contains the elements of a QRIS. QRIS refers to a systematic framework for evaluating, improving, and communicating the level of quality in early childhood programs and contains five key elements:

1. Program standards
2. Supports to programs to improve quality
3. Financial incentives and supports
4. Quality assurance and monitoring
5. Outreach and consumer education

7.3.1 Does your state/territory have a quality rating and improvement system or another system of quality improvement?

- ☐ a. No, the state/territory has no plans for QRIS development. If no, skip to 7.4.1.
- ☐ b. No, but the state/territory is in the QRIS development phase. If no, skip to 7.4.1.
- ☐ c. Yes, the state/territory has a QRIS operating statewide or territory-wide. Describe how the QRIS is administered (e.g., statewide or locally or through CCR&R entities) and any partners, and provide a link, if available. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☒ d. Yes, the state/territory has a QRIS initiative operating as a pilot-test in a few localities or only a few levels but does not have a fully operating initiative on a statewide or territory-wide basis. Provide a link, if available. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ e. Yes, the state/territory has another system of quality improvement. Describe the other system of quality improvement and provide a link, if available. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

7.3.2 Indicate how providers participate in the state or territory's QRIS or another system of quality improvement.

- a. Are providers required to participate in the QRIS or another system of quality improvement? Check all that apply if response differs for different categories of care.
 - ☒ i. Participation is voluntary.
 - ☐ ii. Participation is partially mandatory. For example, participation is mandatory for providers serving children receiving a subsidy, participation is mandatory for all licensed providers or participation is mandatory for programs serving children birth to age 5 receiving a subsidy. If checked, describe the relationship between QRIS participation and subsidy (e.g., minimum rating required, reimbursed at higher rates for achieving higher ratings, participation at any level). [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ iii. Participation is required for all providers.
- b. Which types of settings or distinctive approaches to early childhood education and care participate in the state/territory's QRIS or another system of quality improvement? Check all that apply.
 - ☒ i. Licensed child care centers
 - ☐ ii. Licensed family child care homes
 - ☐ iii. License-exempt providers
 - ☐ iv. Early Head Start programs
 - ☐ v. Head Start programs
 - ☐ vi. State Prekindergarten or preschool programs
 - ☐ vii. Local district-supported Prekindergarten programs
 - ☒ viii. Programs serving infants and toddlers
 - ☐ ix. Programs serving school-age children
 - ☒ x. Faith-based settings

- ☐ xi. Tribally operated programs
 - ☐ xiv. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- c. Describe how the Lead Agency's QRIS, or other system for improving quality, considers how quality may look different in the different types of provider settings which participate in the QRIS or other system of quality improvement. For instance, does the system of quality improvement consider what quality looks like in a family child care home with mixed-age groups vs. child care centers with separate age groups? Or are standards related to quality environments flexible enough to define quality in home-based environments, as well as child care center environments? [Pasitos, Puerto Rico's QRIS, is designed for the assessment of center-based operations and uses the state/territory's licensing statutory and regulatory requirements as the baseline. At the moment it does not consider the quality assessment of other types of provider settings such as family child care homes. Nevertheless, standards are flexible enough to identify certain quality features in different child care and development settings.](#)

7.3.3 Identify how the state or territory supports and assesses the quality of child care providers.

The Lead Agency may invest in the development, implementation, or enhancement of a tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care providers and services or another system of quality improvement. Note: If a Lead Agency decides to invest CCDF quality dollars in a QRIS, that agency can use the funding to assist in meeting consumer education requirements (98.33).

Do the state/territory's quality improvement standards align with or have reciprocity with any of the following standards?

- ☐ No
- ☒ Yes. If yes, check the type of alignment, if any, between the state/territory's quality standards and other standards. Check all that apply.
 - ☐ a. Programs that meet state/territory PreK standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, there is a reciprocal agreement between PreK programs and the quality improvement system).
 - ☒ b. Programs that meet federal Head Start Program Performance Standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, there is a reciprocal agreement between Head Start programs and the quality improvement system).
 - ☒ c. Programs that meet national accreditation standards are able to meet all or part of the quality improvement standards (e.g., content of the standards is the same, an alternative pathway exists to meeting the standards).
 - ☐ d. Programs that meet all or part of state/territory school-age quality standards.
 - ☐ e. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

7.3.4 Do the state/territory's quality standards build on its licensing requirements and other regulatory requirements?

- ☐ No
- ☒ Yes. If yes, check any links between the state/territory's quality standards and licensing requirements.

- ☒ a. Requires that a provider meet basic licensing requirements to qualify for the base level of the QRIS.
- ☒ b. Embeds licensing into the QRIS.
- ☐ c. State/territory license is a “rated” license.
- ☐ d. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

7.3.5 Does the state/territory provide financial incentives and other supports designed to expand the full diversity of child care options and help child care providers improve the quality of services that are provided through the QRIS or another system of quality improvement.

☐ No

☒ Yes. If yes, check all that apply.

a. If yes, indicate in the table below which categories of care receive this support.

Financial incentive or other supports	Licensed center-based	License exempt center-based	Licensed family child care home	License-exempt family child care home	In-home (care in the child’s own home)
i. One-time grants, awards, or bonuses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Ongoing or periodic quality stipends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. Higher subsidy payments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. Training or technical assistance related to QRIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. Coaching/mentoring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi. Scholarships, bonuses, or increased compensation for degrees/certificates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vii. Materials and supplies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
viii. Priority access for other grants or programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ix. Tax credits for providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
x. Tax credits for parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
xi. Payment of fees (e.g. licensing, accreditation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Other: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- 7.3.6 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.3 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

7.4 Improving the Supply and Quality of Child Care Programs and Services for Infants and Toddlers

Lead Agencies are required to spend 3 percent of their total CCDF expenditures on activities to improve the supply and quality of their infant and toddler care. This is in addition to the general quality set-aside requirement.

Lead Agencies are encouraged to use the required needs assessment to systematically review and improve the overall quality of care that infants and toddlers receive, the systems in place or needed to support and enhance the quality of infant and toddler providers, the capacity of the infant and toddler workforce to meet the unique needs of very young children, and the methods in place to increase the proportion of infants and toddlers in higher quality care, including any partnerships or coordination with Early Head Start and IDEA Part C programs.

- 7.4.1 Identify and describe the activities that are being implemented by the state/territory to improve the supply (see also section 4) and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers and check which of the activities are available to each provider type.

	Activities available to improve the supply and quality of infant and toddler care.	Licensed center-based	License exempt center-based	Licensed family child care home	License-exempt family child care home	In-home care (care in the child's own home)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	a. Establishing or expanding high-quality community- or neighborhood-based family and child development centers. These centers can serve as resources to child care providers to improve the quality of early childhood services for infants and toddlers from low-income families and to improve eligible child care providers' capacity to offer high-quality, age-appropriate care to infants and toddlers from low-income families. Describe: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	b. Establishing or expanding the operation of community-based, neighborhood-based, or provider networks comprised	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Activities available to improve the supply and quality of infant and toddler care.	Licensed center-based	License exempt center-based	Licensed family child care home	License-exempt family child care home	In-home care (care in the child's own home)
	of home-based providers, or small centers focused on expanding the supply of infant and toddler care. Describe: The Lead Agency requests proposals and funds service providers that create and provide support to networks of high quality home-based providers in communities with limited availability of child care services for infants and toddlers					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	c. Providing training and professional development to enhance child care providers' ability to provide developmentally appropriate services for infants and toddlers. Describe: The Child Care and Development program provides training and technical assistance to providers serving infants and toddlers on child development, developmentally-appropriate practices and environments, curriculum implementation and developmental screening and assessment and early intervention, among other relevant topics for this age group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	d. Providing coaching, mentoring, and/or technical assistance on this age group's unique needs from statewide or territory-wide networks of qualified infant/toddler specialists. Describe: The program's Child Development Unit is in charge of designing the training and technical assistance provided to strengthen teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Activities available to improve the supply and quality of infant and toddler care.	Licensed center-based	License exempt center-based	Licensed family child care home	License-exempt family child care home	In-home care (care in the child's own home)
	serving infants and toddlers. Special efforts are also made to secure qualified infant/toddler specialists as consultants.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	e. Coordinating with early intervention specialists who provide services for infants and toddlers with disabilities under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.). Describe: The Lead Agency has an MOU with the Department of Health's Early Intervention (Part C) Avanzando Juntos program to secure specialized services in an expeditious manner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	f. Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's QRIS, including classroom inventories and assessments. Describe: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	g. Developing infant and toddler components within the state/territory's child care licensing regulations. Describe: The Lead Agency has a close coordination with the state Licensing Office to provide the necessary advise and technical assistance in order to insure that all child care centers serving infants and toddlers comply with the appropriate environments for this developmental stage.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	h. Developing infant and toddler components within the early learning and developmental guidelines. Describe: Lead agency representatives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Activities available to improve the supply and quality of infant and toddler care.	Licensed center-based	License exempt center-based	Licensed family child care home	License-exempt family child care home	In-home care (care in the child's own home)
	participated in the last revision of the Puerto Rico early learning and developmental standards/guidelines in 2016 and are expected to participate in the forthcoming revision by the Department of Education.					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	i. Improving the ability of parents to access transparent and easy-to-understand consumer information about high-quality infant and toddler care that includes information on infant and toddler language, social-emotional, and both early literacy and numeracy cognitive development. Describe: The Child Care and Development program publishes information relevant to infant and toddler development and care on the Lead Agency's Web Page to highlight the importance of that developmental stage. Each document is an easy read for parents and the general public. Providers are referred to these so they can inform parents about these resources. Additionally, the Lead Agency provides developmentally-appropriate resources and educational materials through its "CENTRANA" Resource and Referral centers.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	j. Carrying out other activities determined by the state/territory to improve the quality of infant and toddler care provided within the state/territory and for which there is evidence that the activities will lead to improved infant and toddler health and safety, cognitive and	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Activities available to improve the supply and quality of infant and toddler care.	Licensed center-based	License exempt center-based	Licensed family child care home	License-exempt family child care home	In-home care (care in the child's own home)
	physical development, and/or well-being. Click or tap here to enter text.					
<input type="checkbox"/>	k. Coordinating with child care health consultants. Describe: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	l. Coordinating with mental health consultants. Describe: The Child Care and Development program provides individualized assistance for child assessment and mental health consultation to providers by the Lead Agency specialized consultants. Referrals are also made to the Department of Health, as needed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	m. Establishing systems to collect real time data on available (vacant) slots in ECE settings, by age of child, quality level, and location of program. Describe: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	n. Other. Describe: Click or tap here to enter text.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 7.4.2 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.4 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. [The current and revised QRIS assessment instrument is and will be used to assess quality in those center providers who voluntarily participate in the system. Its assessment instrument standards are organized within 10 basic dimensions that guide the observations: Relationships, Daily Activity Plans to Foster Child Development, Teaching, Child Assessment, Health and Safety, Teachers, Families, Community Relations, Physical Environments, Leadership and Administration. The result of the assessment exercise provides the information needed to determine the level \(defined as a “step”\) of the centers compliance with each standard, on a scale from one to five. Standards within each dimension are divided into those that relate to young children of all ages, infants and toddlers and preschoolers. The Child Development Unit also visits child care centers and evaluates infant/toddler caregiving through the use of standardized criteria. Data is aggregated assessment to guide its professional development efforts, including technical assistance.](#)

7.5 Child Care Resource and Referral

A Lead Agency may expend funds to establish, expand, or maintain a statewide system of child care resource and referral services (98.53(a)(5)). It can be coordinated, to the extent determined appropriate by the Lead Agency, by a statewide public or private non-profit, community-based, or regionally based lead child care resource and referral organization (658E(c)(3)(B)(iii)). This effort may include activities done by local or regional child care and resource referral agencies, as discussed in section 1.7.

7.5.1 What are the services provided by the local or regional child care and resource and referral agencies? There are currently two types of CCR&R in the Lead Agency to bring program services closer to communities in need: the CENTRANA centers and the Two Generation Community Centers (2Gen). CENTRANAS serve as educational information and resource centers for families and education staff working or serving child care and development centers. These resources are made available using a lending library system and they usually come along with guidance on their benefits and ways to use them with children in different developmental stages. On the other hand, the 2Gen centers aim to develop and implement a comprehensive and collaborative system for the provision of services to children in their own communities. This center establishes an intervention system that engages parents in their young children's physical, emotional, social, cognitive and behavioral development. This holistic approach gives families broad involvement to play an active role in the proper development of their children

7.5.2 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.5 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. The effectiveness of these CCR&R centers is reflected in increased parent participation to promote their children's well-being and development. This effect is measured through the Pasitos QRIS assessment instrument when applied in the child care centers located in communities where RCCs are located and parents take advantage of their services.

7.6 Facilitating Compliance with State Standards

7.6.1 What activities does your state/territory fund with CCDF quality funds to facilitate child care providers' compliance with state/territory health and safety requirements? These requirements may be related to inspections, monitoring, training, compliance with health and safety standards, and with state/territory licensing standards as outlined in Section 5. Describe: All child care providers must comply with the health and safety requirements for licensing by the Department of the Family Licensing Office. The Lead Agency delegates quality funds to that Office to ensure regular provider inspections and compliance assessments. The Child care and Development program also conducts regular assessment of compliance with its health and safety and child development standards, through its Health and Safety and Quality and Child Development Units. These assessments include additional quality criteria. Coordination exists between the inspectors of the Licensing Office and the Child Care Program Monitors to exchange information and knowledge about providers. The Lead Agency offers training and technical assistance through its Regional Offices. The program also sponsors CPR training, assistance with emergency plans, purchase of health and safety materials or equipment, among other supports to assist providers in complying with the health and safety requirements.

7.6.2 Does the state/territory provide financial assistance to support child care providers in complying with minimum health and safety requirements?

☐ No

☒ Yes. If yes, which types of providers can access this financial assistance?

☒ a. Licensed CCDF providers

☒ b. Licensed non-CCDF providers

☒ c. License-exempt CCDF providers

☐ d. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- 7.6.3 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.6 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. Both licensing inspectors and child care program monitors use standard protocols and instruments to guide their observations and determine the level of compliance with health and safety requirements of each provider. Requirements are based on the abbreviated 'Caring for Our Children' National Health and Safety Performance Standards for ECCE programs. Results are then used to design quality improvement plans, as needed. The program also aggregates assessment data to guide its professional development efforts.

7.7 Evaluating and Assessing the Quality and Effectiveness of Child Care Programs and Services

- 7.7.1 Does the state/territory measure the quality and effectiveness of child care programs and services in both child care centers and family child care homes?

- ☒ No
- ☐ Yes. If yes, describe any tools used to measure child, family, teacher, classroom, or provider improvements, and how the state/territory evaluates how those tools positively impact children. [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- 7.7.2 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.7 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in child care centers and family child care homes within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures.
- The Lead Agency is currently updating its former QRIS through the PDG B-5 to produce a more comprehensive system that includes other modalities of care, better aligns with other quality standards such as the Head Start Performance Standards and continue to articulate with the revised NAEYC national standards. The Lead Agency also expects articulation with the Puerto Rico professional development framework, career path and Registry, also in development. The current and revised QRIS assessment instrument is and will be used to assess quality in those center providers who voluntarily participate in the system. Its assessment instrument standards are organized within 10 basic dimensions that guide the observations: Relationships, Daily Activity Plans to Foster Child Development, Teaching, Child Assessment, Health and Safety, Teachers, Families, Community Relations, Physical Environments, Leadership and Administration. The result of the assessment exercise provides the information needed to determine the level (defined as a "step") of the centers compliance with each standard, on a scale from one to five. The QRIS system assessment results will feed into the new integrated data system to be created with PDG B-5 funds to support performance measurement, cross-agency data use and analysis for policy update and continuous program.

7.8 Accreditation Support

- 7.8.1 Does the state/territory support child care providers in the voluntary pursuit of accreditation by a national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of high quality?
- ☐ a. Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide for both child care centers and family child care homes. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to child care centers and family child care homes to achieve accreditation. Is accreditation available for

programs serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- ☐ b. Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide for child care centers only. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to child care centers. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ c. Yes, the state/territory has supports operating statewide or territory-wide for family child care homes only. Describe the support efforts for all types of accreditation that the state/territory provides to family child care. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ d. Yes, the state/territory has supports operating as a pilot-test or in a few localities but not statewide or territory-wide.
 - ☐ i. Focused on child care centers. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ ii. Focused on family child care homes. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ e. No, but the state/territory is in the in the development phase of supporting accreditation.
 - ☐ i. Focused on child care centers. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 - ☐ ii. Focused on family child care homes. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☒ f. No, the state/territory has no plans for supporting accreditation.

7.8.2 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.8 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. [n/a](#)

7.9 Program Standards

7.9.1 Describe how the state/territory supports state/territory or local efforts to develop or adopt high-quality program standards, including standards for:

- a. Infants and toddlers [n/a](#)
- b. Preschoolers [n/a](#)
- c. and/or School-age children. [n/a](#)

- 7.9.2 Describe the measurable indicators of progress relevant to subsection 7.9 that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services within the state/territory and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. [n/a](#)

7.10 Other Quality Improvement Activities

- 7.10.1 List and describe any other activities that the state/territory provides to improve the quality of child care services for infants and toddlers, preschool-aged, and school-aged children, which may include consumer and provider education activities; and also describe the measurable indicators of progress for each activity relevant to this use of funds that the state/territory will use to evaluate its progress in improving provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or kindergarten entry, and the data on the extent to which the state or territory has met these measures. Describe: . In order to improve the quality of care services ACUDEN has established several activities, including: 1) ACUDEN Academy, to funnel all the required staff and provider training opportunities, and to uniformly document successful participation that will constitute evidence of progress through a career path. The standardized professional development program will include all training in health and safety; CPR; socio-emotional development; child development strategies and best practices; CDA competencies, among other essential topics. Trainees will get a Certificate of Participation and continuing education hours/units. 2) An enhanced Consumer Education Program that diversifies promotion and educational strategies aimed at parents, providers, and the community at large. It Will highlight topics such as: Early childhood: a critical child development period; developmentally-appropriate activities for each developmental period; locating and selecting a quality child care and development center; best practices for child care and development providers, among others. 3) CDA Training Program, in collaboration with the University of Puerto Rico, for teachers and assistant teachers and caregivers. 4) Special project for the Development and strengthening the use of technology in child care centers, that is aimed at providing computers and internet access to child care centers to allow teachers access to children's electronic records to document their progress, facilitate communication with parents and obtain of information related to their child care and development services. 5) A research-based Universal Curriculum for use in child care centers that will also provide individual child electronic records to document and evaluate progress in each child's development.

8 Ensure Grantee Program Integrity and Accountability

Program integrity and accountability activities are integral to the effective administration of the CCDF program. Lead Agencies are required to describe in their Plan effective internal controls that ensure integrity and accountability while maintaining the continuity of services (98.16(cc)). These accountability measures should address reducing fraud, waste, and abuse, including program violations and administrative errors.

This section includes topics on internal controls to ensure integrity and accountability and processes in place to investigate and recover fraudulent payments and to impose sanctions on clients or providers in response to fraud. Respondents should consider how fiscal controls, program integrity, and accountability apply to:

- Memorandums of understanding (MOUs) within the Lead Agency's various divisions that administer or carry out the various aspects of CCDF
- MOUs, grants, or contracts to other state agencies that administer or carry out various aspects of CCDF

- Grants or contracts to other organizations that administer or carry out various aspects of CCDF, such as professional development and family engagement activities
- Internal processes for conducting child care provider subsidy

8.1 Internal Controls and Accountability Measures to Help Ensure Program Integrity

8.1.1 Lead Agencies must ensure the integrity of the use of funds through sound fiscal management and must ensure that financial practices are in place (98.68 (a)(1)). Describe the processes in place for the Lead Agency to ensure sound fiscal management practices for all expenditures of CCDF funds. Check all that apply:

- ☒ a. Verifying and processing billing records to ensure timely payments to providers.
Describe: To ensure proper and timely care voucher payment, service providers must submit the child's attendance on or before the first five (5) working days to the corresponding ACUDEN regional office, located at Aguadilla, Arecibo, Bayamon, Carolina, Humacao, Guayama, Mayaguez, y Ponce. Once the Eligibility Technician receives the assistance, the Assistant Coordinator located at each Regional Office verifies and approves it through the CIMA system, and then the ACUDEN Payroll and Payment Office Section processes a funding request to the Treasury Department to process the payments through electronic transfer to the providers according to the assistance approved through the CIMA system. Providers who are participating on the subsidized program, vouchers, receive monthly payments for their services. Regarding disbursements to service providers through proposals, the funds delegation contract stipulates that payments will be made quarterly (3) months in advance for the operation of the center, if the entity or municipality complies with the requirements stipulated in the contract to protect the proper use of the funds delegated to it
- ☒ b. Fiscal oversight of grants and contracts. Describe: the delegation of funds delegation of funds contracts with the purpose of including all instructions or recommendations received by the Inspector General's Office of the United States and the Puerto Rico Comptroller's Office before the beginning of every program year. In addition, the Offices of Finance and Fiscal Monitoring meets are convened annually by the Administration as part of the proposal evaluation process to conduct an analysis of the provider's vendors' fiscal profile files with the purpose of recommending to the ACUDEN Agency's Administrator the correct and timely compliance with fiscal requirements and proper management of the assigned funds. This evaluation could be favorable or unfavorable for the service provider according to the results of the performed analysis. If not favorable, a conditional contract is recommended. In addition, annually, the Fiscal Monitoring Division requests any entity or municipality that receives more than \$750,000.00 dollars in total federal funds to submit a "single audit" for evaluation. This is not limited by the fact that the delegation of funds does not reach the amount required for the single audit. If a finding is identified on the report regarding the management of CCDF program and/or any other federal funds program, a corrective action plan (CAP) is requested that will stipulate procedures to prevent the recurrence of the finding and prevent the recurrence of the weakness from affecting the delegated funds from ACUDEN. If the finding is associated with the CCDF program, as mandated by OMB-A133, the service provider will be visited to corroborate the implementation of the CAP. Also, the Fiscal Monitoring Division staff may perform fiscal evaluations upon internal or external referrals to verify compliance with the fund's delegation contract and federal regulation. If the service provider have is identified with a fiscal finding or questionable cost, the Fiscal Monitoring Division prepares a report recommending that the questioned cost be billed in accordance with Regulation # 44, Non-Contributory Debts of the Department of the Treasury. It also requires a CAPPAC,

including the appropriate internal controls to avoid the same recurrence. The CAP PAC must be approved by the Fiscal Monitoring Division, and after six (6) months of its implementation it must be corroborated

- ☒ c. **Tracking systems to ensure reasonable and allowable costs. Describe:**
To ensure providers compliance with the cost principle, ACUDEN perform monitoring visits to the centers to review fiscal records as needed by referral or by a random system to follow ups. Authorized personnel from the Finance and Fiscal Monitoring Divisions will conduct random visits to providers in order to ensure compliance with the Federal Code of Federal Regulations Part 200 (CFR Part 200), standard administrative requirements, cost principles and audits that are required for the federal grant "Federal Award" by the CCDF program. In addition, service providers that are autonomous municipalities are regulated by Law # 81, of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Autonomous Municipalities Act of August 30, 1991, revised in 2006. The law stipulates that to make any good or service purchase, there must be three (3) or more quotes under equal conditions, informal auctions and/or auctions, as applicable. Likewise, Law 230, Accountancy of the Government of Puerto Rico, July 23, 1974, amended on March 20, 2017
- ☐ d. **Other. Describe:** *Click or tap here to enter text.*

8.1.2 Check and describe the processes that the Lead Agency will use to identify risk in their CCDF program (98.68(a)(2)). Check all that apply:

- ☒ a. **Conduct a risk assessment of policies and procedures. Describe:**
The Finance and Fiscal Monitoring Divisions evaluate annually the service providers fiscal operations before awarding a proposal and make a recommendation. As instructed by the Office of the Comptroller of PR, such recommendation must be taken into consideration before awarding a continuation proposal. In addition, as instructed by the Office of the Comptroller of PR, the Fiscal Monitoring Division performs every three (3) years the application of the Criteria Form for the Evaluation and Self-Evaluation for of the Establishment of the Internal Control and Fraud Prevention Program form called (PROCIP, Spanish acronym). Also, at the request of the Head Start Program, the Fiscal Monitoring Division evaluates ACUDEN's internal controls annually to detect any weaknesses that could affect all the programs for which ACUDEN receives funds.
- ☒ b. **Establish checks and balances to ensure program integrity. Describe:**
The Finance Division requires submitting bank statements, bank reconciliations and cancelled checks to ensure that the funds are being used in accordance with the budget approved at the time of the funds' assignment Also ACUDEN uses two electronic fiscal management systems, CIMA and PRIFAS, to ensure correct payments and to avoid fraud, at the same time to facilitate electronic payments.
- ☐ c. **Use supervisory reviews to ensure accuracy in eligibility determination. Describe:**
The Child Care Program has different levels of supervision to ensure that the determination of eligibility is correct. For that, the CIMA electronic case management system has security levels that validate whether the information included is correct as well as the income analysis vs. the amount of benefit the family would receive for payment for childcare services. Also, this information, which is analyzed and entered to the system by an Eligibility Technician, is then submitted for approval by the Assistant Regional Coordinator who finally approves the eligibility by verifying that all criterions are met and that all documentation on file is the correct. As part of the monitoring process, Central Level, thru the Eligibility Area, chooses a random sample of cases to verify compliance using the eligibility criteria in approved cases. Based on these results, training and technical assistance strategies are established for the appropriate corrections

☐ d. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

8.1.3 States and territories are required to describe effective internal controls that are in place to ensure program integrity and accountability (98.68(a)), including processes to train child care providers and staff of the Lead Agency and other agencies engaged in the administration of CCDF about program requirements and integrity.

a. Check and describe how the state/territory ensures that all providers for children receiving CCDF funds are informed and trained regarding CCDF requirements and integrity (98.68(a)(3)). Check all that apply.

- ☒ i. Issue policy change notices. Describe: In case that (ACUDEN) implements changes to Program policies and procedures the agency issues a policy change notification to inform providers, usually by mail and through the ACUDEN web page. If the change implies the ways to make eligible families or related to new requirement to become a CCDF provider, the agency provide trainings and technical assistance to ensure understanding and compliance. Monitoring process are in place to follow ups on practices and compliance. In case the change is related to fiscal issues a Memorandum of Understanding is issue by ACUDEN to" notifying providers about any changes in fiscal policies and procedures and technical assistance is available to providers.
- ☒ ii. Issue policy manual. Describe: ACUDEN provides training in best practices for sound management, in accordance with state and federal regulations, and as stipulated in the delegation of funds contract. In addition, the Finance and Fiscal Monitoring Divisions will provide technical assistance to service providers to ensure that they effectively understand fiscal requirements and how to be in compliance with ACUDEN's required policies and procedures. Providers can access all policy manuals through the ACUDEN web page, also contact us and share any concerns about the information included in the manual to receive assistance
- ☒ iii. Provide orientations. We provide orientations that are based on a process of guidance, assistance, and support to resolve an existing situation
- ☒ iv. Provide training. Describe: Yes, we provide training where we transmit the appropriate knowledge, skills or behaviors for fiscal management through technical assistance to CCDF providers
- ☒ v. Monitor and assess policy implementation on an ongoing basis. Describe: ACUDEN's Finance Division stipulates through the contract for the disbursement of funds that prior to making a disbursement, service providers must submit several documents and reports to allow ACUDEN's fiscal staff to validate appropriate and permissible use of the designated funds. When irregularities in the use of designated funds are detected, they are referred to the Fiscal Monitoring Division for the corresponding evaluation according to ACUDEN's intervention protocol
- ☒ vi. Meet regularly regarding the implementation of policies. Describe: All providers participate in an initial meeting/orientation to learn about Program policies and procedures. Follow ups meeting are offered to keep updating information and as a results of the monitoring process where weakness or concerns are identifying and may affect their compliance. In case of fiscal issues, Meetings also are held when changes are made to Federal Regulations or in Puerto Rico Government Law 230, as well as applicable circular letters from the Treasury Department to clarify doubts or to assist suppliers in compliance

☐ vii. Other. Describe: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

b. Check and describe how the Lead Agency ensures that all its staff members and any staff members in other agencies who administer the CCDF program through MOUs, grants and contracts are informed and trained regarding program requirements and integrity (98.68 (a)(3)). Check all that apply:

- ☒ i. Issue policy change notices. Describe: If the Administration for the Integral Care and Development of Children (ACUDEN) make announcements about changes to its policies and procedures or if any change in the state or federal regulations. Also changes are provided in written and available through the webpage for easy access. ACUDEN's leadership offer training to their staff to ensure their appropriate performance.
- ☒ ii. Train on policy change notices. Describe: In the event (ACUDEN) makes changes to policies and procedures or if there is a change in federal regulations, ACUDEN makes sure to include these changes in staff training. The ACUDEN fiscal area issues an explanatory memorandum "Memorandum of Understanding" " notifying of any changes in policies and procedures to the staff. In addition, notifying the service provider of any new fiscal information or procedures that need to be implemented.
- ☒ iii. Issue policy manuals. Describe: Policy and regulation manuals as the Best Practices in Federal Funds Management is available to the staff. In addition, the Finance and Fiscal Monitoring Divisions offer technical assistance to service providers to ensure that they effectively understand the fiscal requirements and ensure compliance with the required ACUDEN policies and procedures outlined in the Delegation of Funds contract.
- ☒ iv. Train on policy manual. Describe: The agency provides training to the staff on best practices on program procedures and for managing federal funds. In addition, the Finance and Fiscal Monitoring Divisions will provide technical assistance to service providers to ensure that they effectively understand the fiscal requirements and to follow the required policies and procedures of ACUDEN in the contract for the Delegation of Funds.
- ☒ v. Monitor and assess policy implementation on an ongoing basis. Describe: ACUDEN' staff are trained to monitor compliance with program and finance procedures and requirements. The Finance Division stipulates, that before making any disbursement, the service providers must submit various documents and reports to allow ACUDEN's fiscal staff the opportunity to validate the proper and permissible use of funds. When any irregularity is detected regarding the use of delegated funds, and based on the intervention protocol, this is referred over to the Fiscal Monitoring Division for the corresponding evaluation
- ☒ vi. Meet regularly regarding the implementation of policies. Describe: Meetings are held when there are changes in the Federal Regulations or in Act 230 of the Government of Puerto Rico, or applicable circular letters from the Treasury Department. Meetings focus on situations that could be a risk for the proper use of federal funds.
- ☐ vii. Other. Describe: *Click or tap here to enter text.*

8.1.4 Describe the processes in place to regularly evaluate Lead Agency internal control activities (98.68 (a)(4)). Describe: ACUDEN's fiscal area, specifically the Fiscal Monitoring Division, conducts an annual self-evaluation to guarantee compliance with the appropriate internal controls, evaluating disbursements, payrolls, reconciliations, file and supporting documents, and purchasing and property procedures. Also the programmatic area performed continuing self-monitoring to ensure staff compliance with regulations, for example taking random sample to determine error on family eligibility determination. In case of any finding, a CAP is established to improve staff performance

8.1.5 Lead Agencies conduct a wide variety of activities to fight fraud and ensure program integrity. Lead Agencies are required to have processes in place to identify fraud and other program violations to ensure program integrity. Program violations can include both intentional and unintentional client and/or provider violations, as defined by the Lead Agency. These violations and errors, identified through the error-rate review process, may result in payment or nonpayment (administrative) errors and may or may not be the result of fraud, based on the Lead Agency definition. Check and describe any activities that the Lead Agency conducts to ensure program integrity.

- a. Check and describe all activities that the Lead Agency conducts, including the results of these activities, to **identify and prevent fraud or intentional program violations**. Include in the description how each activity assists in the identification and prevention of fraud and intentional program violations.

☒	<p>i. Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)).</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: Prior to finalizing the delegation of funds contract, ACUDEN's Legal Division verifies that the supplier, contractor and/or company is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) and prints the result of the search for each service provider, contractor and/or company. On the other hand, for the family eligibility determination PR does not have access to other programs database to compare and corroborate information.</p>
☒	<p>ii. Run system reports that flag errors (include types).</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: In ACUDEN's Finance Division, the following reports are received and verified to ensure compliance with the delegation of funds contract and State and Federal regulations: * Summary of Expenditures by Category- this report prevents a service provider from making disbursements for an unauthorized category or item of expenditure. * List of Obligations - this details all accounts payable for the project. * Bank statements, bank reconciliations and cancelled checks - with these documents we can identify whether an expense was allowed and authorized in the list of obligations. Also, if the supplier was paid within the terms required by federal regulations and verification of cash on hand balances. * Certified payroll-verify that the payroll expense does not exceed the amount approved in the proposal, if there is no change in enrollment that affects the child/adult ratio. * Annual requirements: * Public Liability Insurance- ACUDEN guarantee non-federal financial compensation in the event of any unintentional accident affecting children, parents, and employees of the service provider. *Fidelity Bond Insurance - ACUDEN guarantee the protection of the delegated funds from any fraudulent action by the recipient and/or their employees. * Bank Account Certification - This identifies the persons authorized to handle the funds deposited in the account. * Registry of</p>

	Authorized Signatures Model SC781 We guarantee who are the persons responsible for preparing and signing the different fiscal reports or for carrying out the different fiscal processes
☒	<p>iii. Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: To ensure the proper and timely payment of the childcare voucher, service providers (caregivers) must submit the child's attendance on or before the first five (5) working days to the appropriate regional office. When the Eligibility Technician receives the attendance, they proceed to register it and the Assistant Coordinator that is in each Regional Office verifies and approves it in the CIMA system. Then the Payroll and Payment Section of ACUDEN, processes a request for funds to the Treasury Department, to make the payments through electronic transfer to the providers according to the approved attendance records in the CIMA system. Regarding disbursements to service providers through proposals, the contract for the delegation of funds stipulates that payments will be made through quarterly (3) month advances of funds for the operation of the center, provided that the entity or municipality complies with the requirements established in the contract for the purpose of protecting the proper use of the delegated funds. In the Finance Division's Billing and Collections Section, in the case of individuals or legal entities, for services rendered to governmental entities or for Program benefits improperly received, collection procedures are carried out. In addition, to determine, settle and administratively dispose of an overdue non-contributory debt and request that it be declared uncollectible, cancelled, or liquidated. Some of the non-contributory debts that arise because of ACUDEN's operations or functions are as follows: Audit Reports - Questioned Costs Undue payments or benefits received without entitlement. Fiscal Monitoring Findings, Child Care Program Closure Reports. Uncovered Spaces and Head Start/Early Head Start, Returned Checks. Regulation No. 44, "Existing non-tax debts in favor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico," of the Department of the Treasury, is the one used to carry out the procedures for the collection of debts in favor of ACUDEN. This Regulation establishes the rules to be followed by Government Agencies when carrying out debt collection procedures. The Objective is to use all available means to collect debts in the most effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Law, Regulations and Rules in force promulgated by the Treasury Department or other governmental entities. Collection Procedures - The following procedures are contained in paragraphs A, B, C, D and E of Article V of the Regulations: The request for the initial collection process is received and a Collection Invoice (Model SC-724) is prepared. The debtor will be granted thirty (30) calendar days to make the payment. Both the original invoice and the copy must be approved and signed by the Finance Division Director. The original invoice is sent to the debtor and a file is prepared to include the collection request, letters sent, copies of payments received, if any, and copies of any remittances and is filed. If ten (10) business days after the due date established on the invoice has elapsed without a payment being received or a payment plan has been initiated and no action has been taken, the Finance Division Director will send a second notice, "Second Collection Action for Non-Contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071). This second collection notice must be sent with acknowledgement of receipt by mail or personal delivery and will indicate to the debtor the due date, nature and amount of the debt and the surcharges and accrued interest, if any. If payment is not initiated or the debt is not settled, the Director of the Finance Division will verify, in cases that the debtor is included in the Register of Subsidiaries of the PRIFAS Central Accounting System. If registered, the "Notice of Non-contributory Debts or Authorization to Cancel or Amend a Notice" (Form SC-776.1) will be prepared and sent to the Debt Section of the Central Accounting Area's Intervention Bureau. This notice, to deduct the debt from the payment or reimbursement made in favor of the debtor, pursuant to Section 9(j) of Act No. 230 of July 23, 1974, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Government Accounting Act. Rejected Checks Procedure - In the case of rejected checks, the procedure shall be in</p>

	<p>accordance with the provisions of subsection F (1,2,3,4, and 5), of Article V. Subsection No. 1 establishes that the list of rejected checks sent by Banco Popular shall be sent to the agencies by the Reconciliation Division of the Treasury Area. Subsection No. 2 establishes the procedure to be followed when the debt is less than \$5,000.00, and the efforts for the collection of the check have been unsuccessful, as follows: The "Report of Rejected Checks by the Bank when Collection Efforts Have Been Unsuccessful", (Form SC-1107) is prepared and sent to the Treasury Area's Revenue Accounting Division to evaluate whether the collection efforts has been completed. This report must be sent with a copy of the file, including the returned check, a copy of the "Invoice for Collection", (Form SC-724), and the document "Second Collection Management of Non-contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071), so that the Treasury Area may evaluate whether the collection efforts has been completed. Item No. 3 concerns the procedures to follow when the rejected check is successfully collected. In items 4 and 5, it states: Rejected checks sent for collection efforts may not remain in the possession of the Special Official Collector or Special Paying Officer for more than three (3) months. When making collection efforts, the agencies must exhaust all available resources prior to referring the cases to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area of the Department of the Treasury. Objection to the Payment of the Debt - The following procedures are included in Article VI, Subparagraphs A, B and C of the Regulations: If the debtor files an objection to the payment of the debt, within fifteen (15) working days following the receipt of Form SC-724, ACUDEN will stop all collection action of the debt. In cases where a second collection action is issued, the debtor will have ten (10) working days to object to the second collection action. If no notice is received, the case will continue to be processed. When the debtor objects to the payment for the debt, the Finance Director will study the case and notify the debtor in writing of the decision within twenty (20) working days from the date of receipt of the objection. If the debtor does not agree with the decision taken, he/she shall inform the Director of Finance of his/her reasons in writing within fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt of the notice. Subsection D provides the procedures to be followed when the debtor submits an appeal to the Director of Finance, and subsection E, the judicial collection procedure when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00. In this case, upon requesting objection to the invoice after the determination of the Director of Finance, the debtor will have the opportunity to file an appeal before the Adjudicatory Board of the Department of the Family.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>iv. Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: All information regarding ACUDEN's fiscal management is included in the Fiscal Procedures Manual, the last approved update was on June 5, 2015. Its main purpose is to establish written procedures for the administrative, fiscal, and budgetary processing performed by the following Divisions: Finance, Budget, Purchasing and Fiscal Monitoring. The Manual provides guidance to ensure the proper and efficient administration, control, management, and disbursement of federal and state funds received by ACUDEN</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>v. Audit provider records.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Fiscal Monitoring Division keeps custody of the service providers files that require the submission of a simple audit and their respective PAC , if applicable. The results of any fiscal audit conducted to service providers and the follow-up of the corrective action plan are also kept in the division custody</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>vi. Train staff on policy and/or audits.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Delegating Agency (ACUDEN) provides training in best practices for the management of federal funds, as stipulated in federal regulations and the delegation of funds contract. In addition, the</p>

	Finance and Fiscal Monitoring Divisions offers technical assistance to service providers to ensure that they effectively understand the fiscal requirements and how to follow ACUDEN's policies and procedures. In addition, if changes are made to the policies and procedures or if there are any changes in federal regulations, ACUDEN's fiscal area issues a Memorandum of Understanding" notifying any changes in policies and procedures. In addition to notifying the service provider of any new fiscal information or procedures that need to be implemented
<input type="checkbox"/>	vii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities: Click or tap here to enter text.

- b. Check and describe all activities the Lead Agency conducts, including the results of these activities, to **identify unintentional program violations**. Include in the description how each activity assists in the identification and prevention of unintentional program violations.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	i. Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)). Describe the activities and the results of these activities: Prior to finalizing the delegation of funds contract, ACUDEN's Legal Division verifies that the supplier, contractor and/or company is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) and prints the result of the search for each service provider, contractor and/or company . For the family eligibility determination ACUDEN have no access to other programs database to share or compare information
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ii. Run system reports that flag errors (include types). Describe the activities and the results of these activities: In the ACUDEN Finance Division, the following reports are received and verified to ensure compliance with the delegation of funds contract and State and Federal regulations: * Summary of Expenditures by Category- this report prevents a service provider from making disbursements for an unauthorized category or item of expenditure. * List of Obligations - this details all accounts payable for the project. * Bank statements, bank reconciliations and cancelled checks - with these documents one can identify whether an expense is allowable and if it is authorized in the obligations list. In addition, if the supplier was paid within the required terms according to federal regulations and verify the cash balances "cash on hand". * Certified payroll- Verifies that the payroll expense does not exceed the amount approved in the proposal, if there is no change in enrollment that would affect the child/adult ratio. * Annual requirements: * Public Liability Insurance- We guarantee non-federal financial compensation in the event of any unintentional accident affecting children, parents, and employees of the service provider. *Fidelity Bond Insurance - We guarantee the protection of the delegated funds from any fraudulent actions by the recipient and/or their employees. * Bank Account Certification - This identifies the authorized persons to handle deposited funds in the account. * Registry of Authorized Signatures Model SC781 - We guarantee which are the persons responsible for preparing and signing the different fiscal reports or for carrying out the different fiscal procedures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	iii. Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records. Describe the activities and the results of these activities: To ensure proper and timely child care voucher payment, service providers (caregivers) must submit the child's attendance on or before the first five (5) working days to the corresponding regional office. When the Eligibility Technician receives the attendance, they proceed to register it and the

	<p>Assistant Coordinator located in each Regional Office verifies and approves it in the CIMA system. Then the ACUDEN Payroll and Payment Section processes a request for funds to the Treasury Department to make the payments through electronic transfer to the providers according to the approved attendance in the CIMA system. Regarding disbursements to service providers through proposals, the contract for the delegation of funds stipulates that payments will be made quarterly (3) months in advance for the operation of the center, provided that the entity or municipality complies with the requirements stipulated in the contract for the purpose of protecting the proper use of the funds delegated to it. In the Billing and Collections Section, collection procedures are carried out in the case of individuals or legal entities, for services rendered to governmental entities or for Program benefits improperly received. Some of the non-contributory debts originated as a result of ACUDEN's operations or functions are as follows: Audit Reports - Questioned Costs, Improper Payments or benefits received without entitlement. Fiscal Monitoring Findings, Child Care Program Closure Reports. Non-covered spaces, non-compliance with enrollment and Head Start/Early Head Start Final Reports or returned checks. Regulation No. 44, "Existing non-tax debts in favor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico," of the Department of the Treasury, is the one used to carry out the procedures for the collection of debts in favor of ACUDEN. This Regulation establishes the rules to be followed by Government Agencies when carrying out debt collection procedures. Objective To use all available means to collect debts in the most effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Law, Regulations and Rules in force promulgated by the Treasury Department or other governmental entities. Collection Procedures The following procedures are contained in paragraphs A, B, C, D and E, of Article V, of the Regulations: The request for initial collection is received and an Invoice for Collection (Model SC-724) is prepared. The debtor will be given thirty (30) calendar days to make payment and (15) days to appeal. Both the original invoice and the copy must be approved and signed by the Director of the Finance Division. The original invoice is sent to the debtor and a file is prepared to include the request for collection, submitted letters, copies of received payments, if any, and copies of the remittances are filed. If after ten (10) working days from the due date stated on the invoice without payment being received or a payment plan has been initiated and no action has been taken, the Finance Division Director will send a second notice, "Second Collection Action for Non-Contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071). This second collection notice must be sent with a return receipt requested by mail or personal delivery and will indicate the due date, nature and amount of the debt and the surcharges and accumulated interest, if any, to the debtor. If payment is not initiated or the debt is not settled, the Finance Division Director will verify, in cases where the debtor is included in the Register of Subsidiaries of the PRIFAS Central Accounting System. If registered, the "Notice of Non-contributory Debts or Authorization to Cancel or Amend a Notice" (Form SC-776.1) will be prepared and sent to the Central Accounting Area, Debt Section Intervention Bureau. This notice, so that the debt may be deducted from the payment or reimbursement made in favor of the debtor, pursuant to Section 9(j) of Act No. 230 of July 23, 1974, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Government Accounting Act. Rejected Checks Procedure - In the case of rejected checks, the procedure shall be as provided in subsection F (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5), of Article V. Subsection No. 1 establishes that the list of dishonored checks sent by Banco Popular shall be sent to the agencies by the Reconciliation Division of the Treasury Area. Subsection No. 2 establishes the procedure to be followed when the debt is less than \$5,000.00, and the efforts to collect the check have been unsuccessful, as follows: The "Report of Checks Rejected by the Bank for which Collection Efforts Have Been Unsuccessful", (Form SC-1107) is prepared and sent to the Accounting Division.</p>
☒	<p>iv. Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: All ACUDEN's fiscal management information is contained in the Fiscal Procedures Manual which was updated</p>

	on June 5, 2015. Its main purpose is to establish written procedures for the administrative, fiscal, and budgetary processes that are carried out in the following Divisions: Finance, Budget, Purchasing and Fiscal Monitoring. This manual serves as a guide to ensure that the Administration, control, management, and disbursement of federal and state funds received by ACUDEN is carried out adequately and effectively. The self-assessment results are evaluated to develop trainings and corrective action plan to improve compliance
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>v. Audit provider records.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: Custody of the service providers files that require the presentation of a simple audit and their respective PAC , if applicable, is maintained in the Fiscal Monitoring Division. The results of any fiscal evaluation performed on service providers and the follow-up of the corrective action plan are also kept in custody at the Division</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>vi. Train staff on policy and/or audits.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: ACUDEN provides training in best practices for the management of federal funds, as stipulated in federal regulations and the delegation of funds contract. Additionally, the Finance and Fiscal Monitoring Divisions offer technical assistance for service providers to ensure that they effectively understand the fiscal requirements and how to follow ACUDEN's policies and procedures. Likewise, if changes are made to the policies and procedures or if there are any changes in federal regulations, ACUDEN's fiscal area will issue a "Memorandum of understanding" notifying of any policy and procedure changes. In addition to informing the service provider of any new fiscal information or procedures that need to be implemented</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>vii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:</p> <p><i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i></p>

- c. Check and describe all activities that the Lead Agency conducts, including the results of these activities, to **identify and prevent agency errors**. Include in the description how each activity assists in the identification and prevention of agency errors.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>i. Share/match data from other programs (e.g., TANF program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Medicaid) or other databases (e.g., State Directory of New Hires, Social Security Administration, Public Assistance Reporting Information System (PARIS)).</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: Before formalizing a contract for the delegation of funds, ACUDEN's Legal Division will verify that the supplier, contractor and/or company is not registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) and will print the result of the inquiry for each service provider, contractor and/or company. ACUDEN have not access to other programs data base to very or share information.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>ii. Run system reports that flag errors (include types).</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: All information regarding ACUDEN's fiscal management is contained in the Fiscal Procedures Manual, the last update of which was approved on June 5, 2015. The main purpose of the manual is to establish procedures regarding the administrative, fiscal, and budgetary processes that are carried out for the following Divisions: Finance, Budget, Purchasing and Fiscal Monitoring. The Manual serves as a guide to ensure that the Administration, control, management, and disbursement of federal and state funds received by ACUDEN are handled properly and efficiently. In addition, the Fiscal Monitoring Division, by instructions of the Office of the Comptroller of PR, carries out every three (3) years an evaluation and self-evaluation of the establishment of an Internal Control and Fraud Prevention Program, called PROCIP, using</p>

	<p>the Criteria for Evaluation and Self-Evaluation Form. In addition, upon request from the Head Start Program, the Fiscal Monitoring Division evaluates ACUDEN's internal controls annually to detect vulnerabilities that could affect all the programs for that ACUDEN receives funds.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>iii. Review enrollment documents and attendance or billing records.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: To ensure proper and prompt payment of the childcare voucher, service providers (caregivers) must submit the child's attendance within five (5) working days to the corresponding regional office. When the Eligibility Technician receives the attendance, they proceed to registers the attendance and the Assistant Coordinator located at each ACUDEN Regional Office will verify and approve the attendance through the CIMA system. The Payroll and Payment Section of ACUDEN will then process a funding request with the Treasury Department to process the payments by electronic transfer to each provider according to the approved attendance records in the CIMA system. Regarding the disbursements of the service providers through proposals, the delegation of funds contract stipulates that payments will be made through quarterly (3) month advances for the operation of the center if the entity or municipality complies with the stipulated requirements in the contract to protect the correct use of the delegated funds. Should the Service Provider realize that ACUDEN has made an error in preparing a collection invoice he/she may object to the debt payment to the Finance Director. The Finance Director will review the case and notify the debtor in writing of the decision made within twenty (20) working days from the date of receipt of the objection. If the debtor does not agree with the decision taken, then he/she shall inform the Director of Finance of his/her reasons in writing within fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt of the communication. Subsection D provides for the procedure when the debtor submits an appeal to the Finance Director, and subsection E, the collection procedure by legal action when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00. In this case, when requesting an objection to the invoice after the determination of the Finance Director, the debtor will have an opportunity to file an appeal before the Department of the Family's Adjudicatory Board.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>iv. Conduct supervisory staff reviews or quality assurance reviews.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: All information regarding ACUDEN's fiscal management is contained in the Fiscal Procedures Manual, the last update of which was approved on June 5, 2015. The main purpose of the manual is to establish procedures regarding the administrative, fiscal, and budgetary processes that are carried out for the following Divisions: Finance, Budget, Purchasing and Fiscal Monitoring. The Manual serves as a guide to ensure that the Administration, control, management, and disbursement of federal and state funds received by ACUDEN.</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>v. Audit provider records.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: When a service provider disagrees with a report issued by the Fiscal Monitoring Division, they may file an objection to the invoice with the Finance Director, who may recuse himself from the process and allow an appeal to be filed with the Department of the Family's Adjudicative Board. The Adjudicative Board abides by Regulation # 7757, issued on October 5, 2009, Regulations to Establish Procedures for the Adjudication of Controversies before the Department of the Family's Adjudicative Board</p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>vi. Train staff on policy and/or audits.</p> <p>Describe the activities and the results of these activities: ACUDEN provides training in best practices for the management of federal funds, as stipulated in federal regulations and the delegation of funds contract. Additionally, the Finance and Fiscal Monitoring Divisions offer technical assistance for service providers to ensure that they effectively understand the fiscal requirements and how to follow ACUDEN's policies and procedures. Likewise, if</p>

	changes are made to the policies and procedures or if there are any changes in federal regulations, ACUDEN's fiscal area will issue a "Memorandum of understanding" notifying of any policy and procedure changes. In addition to informing the service provider of any new fiscal information or procedures that need to be implemented
<input type="checkbox"/>	vii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities: <i>Click or tap here to enter text.</i>

8.1.6 The Lead Agency is required to identify and recover misspent funds as a result of fraud, and it has the option to recover any misspent funds as a result of errors.

- a. Identify what agency is responsible for pursuing fraud and overpayments (e.g. State Office of the Inspector General, State Attorney). *The Finance Division's Billing and Collection Section of ACUDEN will be responsible, once the undue payment has been identified, for taking the necessary steps to recover the federal funds, as well as the recovery of these funds if the case is a Fiscal Monitoring investigation report*
- b. Check and describe all activities, including the results of such activity, that the Lead Agency uses to investigate and recover improper payments due to fraud. Include in the description how each activity assists in the investigation and recovery of improper payment due to fraud or intentional program violations. Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - ☒ i. Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Billing and Collections Section handles collection efforts towards individuals or legal entities regarding services rendered to government entities or Program benefits incorrectly received. Some of the non-contributive debts that originate because of ACUDEN's operations or functions are the following: Audit Reports - Questioned Costs, Improper Payments or benefits received without entitlement. Fiscal Monitoring Findings, Child Care Program Closure Reports. Non-covered spaces, non-compliance with enrollment and Head Start/Early Head Start Final Reports or returned checks. Regulation No. 44, of the Department of the Treasury, "Existing non-tax debts in favor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico," is the regulation that is used to carry out the collection procedures for debt collection on behalf of ACUDEN. This Regulation establishes the rules to be followed by Government Agencies when carrying out debt collection procedures. Purpose is to use all available means to collect debts in the most effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Law, Regulations and Rules in effect issued by the Department of the Treasury or other governmental agencies. Collection Procedures - The following procedures are contained in subparagraphs A, B, C, D and E, of the Article V, of the Regulation: The request for initial collection is received and an Invoice for Collection (Model SC-724) is prepared. The debtor will be given up to thirty (30) calendar days to make the payment and (15) days to appeal. Both the original invoice and the copy must be approved and signed by the Director of the Finance Division. The original invoice is sent to the debtor and a file is prepared to include the collection request, letters sent, copies of payments received, if any, and copies of remittances and filed. If ten (10) business days after the due date stated on the invoice has passed without payment being received or a payment plan has been initiated and no action has been taken, the Director of the Finance Division will send a second notice, "Second Collection Action for Non-Contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071). This second collection notice must be sent with acknowledgement of receipt by mail or personal delivery and will indicate to the debtor the due date, nature and amount of the debt and the surcharges and accrued interest, if any. If payment is not initiated or the debt is not settled, the Director of the Finance Division will verify, in cases where the debtor is included in the Register of Subsidiaries of the PRIFAS

Central Accounting System. If registered, the "Notice of Non-contributory Debts or Authorization to Cancel or Amend a Notice" (Form SC-776.1) will be prepared and sent to the Debt Section of the Central Accounting Area's Intervention Bureau. This notice, to deduct the debt from the payment or reimbursement made in favor of the debtor, pursuant to Section 9(j) of Act No. 230 of July 23, 1974, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Government Accounting Act. Rejected Checks Procedure In the case of rejected checks, the procedure shall be as provided in subsection F(1,2,3,4, and 5) of Article V. Subsection No. 1, establishes that it is the Reconciliation Division of the Treasury that the list of dishonored checks sent by Banco Popular is sent to the agencies. Subsection No. 2 sets forth the procedure to be followed when the debt is less than \$5,000.00, and collection efforts have been unsuccessful, as follows: The "Report of Checks Rejected by the Bank for which Collection Efforts Have Been Unsuccessful", (Form SC-1107) is prepared and sent to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area to evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. This report must be sent with a copy of the file, including the returned check, a copy of the "Invoice for Collection", (Form SC-724), and the document "Second Collection Management of Non-contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071), so that the Treasury Area may evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. Item No. 3 concerns the procedures to be followed when the rejected check is successfully collected. In items 4 and 5, it is stated: Rejected checks sent for collection efforts may not remain in the possession of the Special Official Collector or Special Paying Officer for more than three (3) months. When making collection efforts, the agencies must exhaust all available resources prior to referring the cases to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area of the Department of the Treasury. Objection to the Payment of the Debt The following procedures are included in Article VI, Subparagraphs A, B and C of the Regulations: If the debtor files an objection to the payment of the debt, within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the Model SC-724 invoice, ACUDEN will stop evaluating any collection action on the same. In cases where a second collection action is sent, the debtor will have ten (10) working days to object to the same. If no notice is received, the case will continue to be processed. When the debtor objects to the payment of the debt, the Finance Director will study the case and notify the debtor in writing of the decision within twenty (20) working days from the date of receipt of the objection. If the debtor does not agree with the decision taken, he/she shall inform the Director of Finance of his/her reasons in writing within fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt of the communication. Subsection D provides the procedure to be followed when the debtor submits an appeal to the Director of Finance, and subsection E, the judicial collection procedure when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00. In this case, upon requesting objection to the invoice after the determination of the Director of Finance, the debtor will have the opportunity to file an appeal before the Adjudicatory Board of the Department of the Family. In case of findings demonstrating intentional fraud, the ACUDEN Legal Office should make a referral to investigate through the Department of Justice to take the appropriate actions

- ☒ ii. Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency).

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: By referral from the Finance Director, the ACUDEN Legal Division, using subsection E, of Regulation # 44, will proceed to collect the debt by judicial means when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00, and the collection efforts of the Finance Division are unsuccessful. In this case, the file is sent with the determination and the corresponding details to the Puerto Rico Department of Justice.

- ☒ iii. Recover through repayment plans.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: Regulation # 44 establishes the terms of the Payment Plan, which may be granted by the Finance Director or the Nominating Authority. It establishes a first payment of 50% of the total amount due, and

the other 50% in installments of a maximum of 12 months. The Billing and Collection Division at ACUDEN takes the actions needed to recover the funds

☒ iv. Reduce payments in subsequent months.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: In the request for the three-month funding it is adjusted to satisfy the unpaid tuition debt if there is an invoice to be collected for the current program year

☐ v. Recover through state/territory tax intercepts.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

☐ vi. Recover through other means.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: n/a

☒ vii. Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit below.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Billing and Collections Section handles collection efforts towards individuals or legal entities regarding services rendered to government entities or Program benefits incorrectly received. Some of the non-contributive debts that originate because of ACUDEN's operations or functions are the following: Audit Reports - Questioned Costs, Improper Payments or benefits received without entitlement. Fiscal Monitoring Findings, Child Care Program Closure Reports. Non-covered spaces, non-compliance with enrollment and Head Start/Early Head Start Final Reports or returned checks. Regulation No. 44, of the Department of the Treasury, "Existing non-tax debts in favor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico," is the regulation that is used to carry out the collection procedures for debt collection on behalf of ACUDEN. This Regulation establishes the rules to be followed by Government Agencies when carrying out debt collection procedures. Purpose is to use all available means to collect debts in the most effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Law, Regulations and Rules in effect issued by the Department of the Treasury or other governmental agencies. Collection Procedures - The following procedures are contained in subparagraphs A, B, C, D and E, of the Article V, of the Regulation: The request for initial collection is received and an Invoice for Collection (Model SC-724) is prepared. The debtor will be given up to thirty (30) calendar days to make the payment and (15) days to appeal. Both the original invoice and the copy must be approved and signed by the Director of the Finance Division. The original invoice is sent to the debtor and a file is prepared to include the collection request, letters sent, copies of payments received, if any, and copies of remittances and filed. If ten (10) business days after the due date stated on the invoice has passed without payment being received or a payment plan has been initiated and no action has been taken, the Director of the Finance Division will send a second notice, "Second Collection Action for Non-Contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071). This second collection notice must be sent with acknowledgement of receipt by mail or personal delivery and will indicate to the debtor the due date, nature and amount of the debt and the surcharges and accrued interest, if any. If payment is not initiated or the debt is not settled, the Director of the Finance Division will verify, in cases where the debtor is included in the Register of Subsidiaries of the PRIFAS Central Accounting System. If registered, the "Notice of Non-contributory Debts or Authorization to Cancel or Amend a Notice" (Form SC-776.1) will be prepared and sent to the Debt Section of the Central Accounting Area's Intervention Bureau. This notice, to deduct the debt from the payment or reimbursement made in favor of the debtor, pursuant to Section 9(j) of Act No. 230 of July 23, 1974, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Government Accounting Act. Rejected Checks Procedure In the case of rejected checks, the procedure shall be as provided in subsection F(1,2,3,4, and 5) of Article V. Subsection No. 1, establishes that it is the Reconciliation Division of the Treasury that the list of dishonored

checks sent by Banco Popular is sent to the agencies. Subsection No. 2 sets forth the procedure to be followed when the debt is less than \$5,000.00, and collection efforts have been unsuccessful, as follows: The "Report of Checks Rejected by the Bank for which Collection Efforts Have Been Unsuccessful", (Form SC-1107) is prepared and sent to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area to evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. This report must be sent with a copy of the file, including the returned check, a copy of the "Invoice for Collection", (Form SC-724), and the document "Second Collection Management of Non-contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071), so that the Treasury Area may evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. Item No. 3 concerns the procedures to be followed when the rejected check is successfully collected. In items 4 and 5, it is stated: Rejected checks sent for collection efforts may not remain in the possession of the Special Official Collector or Special Paying Officer for more than three (3) months. When making collection efforts, the agencies must exhaust all available resources prior to referring the cases to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area of the Department of the Treasury. Objection to the Payment of the Debt The following procedures is included in Article VI, Subparagraphs A, B and C of the Regulations: If the debtor files an objection to the payment of the debt, within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the Model SC-724 invoice, ACUDEN will stop evaluating any collection action on the same. In cases where a second collection action is sent, the debtor will have ten (10) working days to object to the same. If no notice is received, the case will continue to be processed. When the debtor objects to the payment of the debt, the Finance Director will study the case and notify the debtor in writing of the decision within twenty (20) working days from the date of receipt of the objection. If the debtor does not agree with the decision taken, he/she shall inform the Director of Finance of his/her reasons in writing within fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt of the communication. Subsection D provides the procedure to be followed when the debtor submits an appeal to the Director of Finance, and subsection E, the judicial collection procedure when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00. In this case, upon requesting objection to the invoice after the determination of the Director of Finance, the debtor will have the opportunity to file an appeal before the Adjudicatory Board of the Department of the Family

- ☐ viii. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

- c. Check and describe any activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to unintentional program violations. Include in the description how each activity assists in the investigation and recovery of improper payments due to unintentional program violations. Include a description of the results of such activity.

Activities can include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ☐ i. N/A. the Lead Agency does not recover misspent funds due to unintentional program violations.
- ☒ ii. Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Billing and Collections Section handles collection efforts towards individuals or legal entities regarding services rendered to government entities or Program benefits incorrectly received. Some of the non-contributive debts that originate because of ACUDEN's operations or functions are the following: Audit Reports - Questioned Costs, Improper Payments or benefits received without entitlement. Fiscal Monitoring Findings, Child Care Program Closure Reports. Non-covered spaces, non-compliance with enrollment and Head Start/Early Head Start Final Reports or returned checks. Regulation No. 44, of the Department of the Treasury, "Existing

non-tax debts in favor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico," is the regulation that is used to carry out the collection procedures for debt collection on behalf of ACUDEN. This Regulation establishes the rules to be followed by Government Agencies when carrying out debt collection procedures. Purpose is to use all available means to collect debts in the most effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Law, Regulations and Rules in effect issued by the Department of the Treasury or other governmental agencies.

Collection Procedures - The following procedures are contained in subparagraphs A, B, C, D and E, of the Article V, of the Regulation: The request for initial collection is received and an Invoice for Collection (Model SC-724) is prepared. The debtor will be given up to thirty (30) calendar days to make the payment and (15) days to appeal. Both the original invoice and the copy must be approved and signed by the Director of the Finance Division. The original invoice is sent to the debtor and a file is prepared to include the collection request, letters sent, copies of payments received, if any, and copies of remittances and filed. If ten (10) business days after the due date stated on the invoice has passed without payment being received or a payment plan has been initiated and no action has been taken, the Director of the Finance Division will send a second notice, "Second Collection Action for Non-Contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071). This second collection notice must be sent with acknowledgement of receipt by mail or personal delivery and will indicate to the debtor the due date, nature and amount of the debt and the surcharges and accrued interest, if any. If payment is not initiated or the debt is not settled, the Director of the Finance Division will verify, in cases where the debtor is included in the Register of Subsidiaries of the PRIFAS Central Accounting System. If registered, the "Notice of Non-contributory Debts or Authorization to Cancel or Amend a Notice" (Form SC-776.1) will be prepared and sent to the Debt Section of the Central Accounting Area's Intervention Bureau. This notice, to deduct the debt from the payment or reimbursement made in favor of the debtor, pursuant to Section 9(j) of Act No. 230 of July 23, 1974, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Government Accounting Act. Rejected Checks Procedure In the case of rejected checks, the procedure shall be as provided in subsection F(1,2,3,4, and 5) of Article V. Subsection No. 1, establishes that it is the Reconciliation Division of the Treasury that the list of dishonored checks sent by Banco Popular is sent to the agencies. Subsection No. 2 sets forth the procedure to be followed when the debt is less than \$5,000.00, and collection efforts have been unsuccessful, as follows: The "Report of Checks Rejected by the Bank for which Collection Efforts Have Been Unsuccessful", (Form SC-1107) is prepared and sent to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area to evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. This report must be sent with a copy of the file, including the returned check, a copy of the "Invoice for Collection", (Form SC-724), and the document "Second Collection Management of Non-contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071), so that the Treasury Area may evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. Item No. 3 concerns the procedures to be followed when the rejected check is successfully collected. In items 4 and 5, it is stated: Rejected checks sent for collection efforts may not remain in the possession of the Special Official Collector or Special Paying Officer for more than three (3) months. When making collection efforts, the agencies must exhaust all available resources prior to referring the cases to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area of the Department of the Treasury.

Objection to the Payment of the Debt The following procedures is included in Article VI, Subparagraphs A, B and C of the Regulations: If the debtor files an objection to the payment of the debt, within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the Model SC-724 invoice, ACUDEN will stop evaluating any collection action on the same. In cases where a second collection action is sent, the debtor will have ten (10) working days to object to the same. If no notice is received, the case will continue to be processed. When the debtor objects to the payment of the debt, the Finance Director will study the case and notify the debtor in writing of the decision within twenty (20) working days from the date of receipt of the objection. If the debtor does not agree with the decision taken, he/she shall inform the Director of Finance of his/her reasons in writing

within fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt of the communication. Subsection D provides the procedure to be followed when the debtor submits an appeal to the Director of Finance, and subsection E, the judicial collection procedure when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00. In this case, upon requesting objection to the invoice after the determination of the Director of Finance, the debtor will have the opportunity to file an appeal before the Department of the Family Adjudicatory Board.

- ☒ iii. Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency).

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: ACUDEN's Legal Division, through a referral from the Finance Director, following subsection E, of Regulation # 44, will proceed to collect the debt through the Judiciary process when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00, and the Finance Division's collection efforts are unsuccessful. In this case, the file with the decision and its details is sent to the Puerto Rico Department of Justice. In case of intentional fraud, the Legal Office at ACUDEN makes a referral to be investigated by the Department of Justice

- ☒ iv. Recover through repayment plans.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: Regulation # 44 establishes the terms of the Payment Plan, which may be granted by the Finance Director or the Nominating Authority. It establishes a first payment of 50% of the total amount due, and the other 50% in installments of a maximum of 12 months.

- ☒ v. Reduce payments in subsequent months.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: In the request for the three-month funding it is adjusted to satisfy the unpaid tuition debt if there is an invoice to be collected for the current program year.

- ☒ vi. Recover through state/territory tax intercepts.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: A CCDF provider who files a collection action must comply with a repayment plan or satisfy in full payment of the debt to receive the delegation of federal funds

- ☒ vii. Recover through other means.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: n/a

- ☒ viii. Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit below.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Invoicing and Collections Section is responsible for the collection of outstanding debts in the case of individuals or legal entities for services rendered to government entities or for program benefits received incorrectly. Some of the non-contributory debts that originate because of ACUDEN's operations or functions are the following: Audit Reports - Questioned Costs, Improper Payments or benefits received without entitlement. Fiscal Monitoring Findings, Child Care Program Closure Reports. Non-covered spaces, non-compliance with enrollment and Head Start/Early Head Start Final Reports or returned checks. Regulation No. 44, "Existing non-tax debts in favor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico," of the Department of the Treasury, is the procedure used to carry out the collection action of the existing debts in favor of ACUDEN. This Regulation establishes the rules to be followed by Government Agencies when carrying out debt collection procedures. Objective To use all available means to collect debts in the most effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Law, Regulations and Rules in force promulgated by the Treasury Department or other governmental entities. Collection Procedures The following procedures are contained in paragraphs A, B, C, D and E, of Article V, of the Regulations: The request for initial collection

is received and an Invoice for Collection (Model SC-724) is prepared. The debtor will be granted thirty (30) calendar days to make payment and (15) days to appeal. Both the original invoice and the copy must be approved and signed by the Finance Division Director. The original invoice is sent to the debtor and a file is prepared to include the collection request, letters sent, copies of payments received, if any, and copies of remittances and filed. If ten (10) business days after the due date stated on the invoice has passed without payment being received or a payment plan has been initiated and no action has been taken, the Director of the Finance Division will send a second notice, "Second Collection Action for Non-Contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071). This second collection notice must be sent with acknowledgement of receipt by mail or personal delivery and will indicate to the debtor the due date, nature and amount of the debt and the surcharges and accrued interest, if any. If payment is not initiated or the debt is not settled, the Director of the Finance Division will verify, in cases where the debtor is included in the Register of Subsidiaries of the PRIFAS Central Accounting System. If registered, the "Notice of Non-contributory Debts or Authorization to Cancel or Amend a Notice" (Form SC-776.1) will be prepared and sent to the Debt Section of the Central Accounting Area's Intervention Bureau. This notice, to deduct the debt from the payment or reimbursement made in favor of the debtor, pursuant to Section 9(j) of Act No. 230 of July 23, 1974, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Government Accounting Act. Rejected Checks Procedure In the case of rejected checks, the procedure shall be as provided in subsection F(1,2,3,4, and 5) of Article V. Subsection No. 1, establishes that it is the Reconciliation Division of the Treasury that the list of dishonored checks sent by Banco Popular is sent to the agencies. Subsection No. 2 sets forth the procedure to be followed when the debt is less than \$5,000.00, and collection efforts have been unsuccessful, as follows: The "Report of Checks Rejected by the Bank for which Collection Efforts Have Been Unsuccessful", (Form SC-1107) is prepared and sent to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area to evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. This report must be sent with a copy of the file, including the returned check, a copy of the "Invoice for Collection", (Form SC-724), and the document "Second Collection Management of Non-contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071), so that the Treasury Area may evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. Item No. 3 concerns the procedures to be followed when the rejected check is successfully collected. In items 4 and 5, it is stated: Rejected checks sent for collection efforts may not remain in the possession of the Special Official Collector or Special Paying Officer for more than three (3) months. When making collection efforts, the agencies must exhaust all available resources prior to referring the cases to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area of the Department of the Treasury. Objection to the Payment of the Debt The following procedures are included in Article VI, Subparagraphs A, B and C of the Regulations: If the debtor files an objection to the payment of the debt, within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the Model SC-724 invoice, ACUDEN shall stop evaluating any collection action on the same. In cases where a second collection action is sent, the debtor will have ten (10) working days to object to it. If no notification is received, the case will continue to be processed. When the debtor objects to the payment of the debt, the Finance Director will study the case and notify the debtor in writing of the decision within twenty (20) working days from the date of receipt of the objection. If the debtor does not agree with the decision taken, he/she shall inform the Director of Finance of his/her reasons in writing within fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt of the communication. Subsection D provides the procedure to be followed when the debtor submits an appeal to the Director of Finance, and subsection E, the judicial collection procedure when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00. In this case, upon requesting objection to the invoice after the determination of the Director of Finance, the debtor will have the opportunity to file an appeal before the Adjudicatory Board of the Department of the Family

- ☐ ix. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:

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- d. Check and describe all activities that the Lead Agency will use to investigate and recover improper payments due to agency errors. Include in the description how each activity assists in the investigation and recovery of improper payments due to administrative errors. Include a description of the results of such activity.
- ☒ i. N/A. the Lead Agency does not recover misspent funds due to agency errors.
 - ☒ ii. Require recovery after a minimum dollar amount of an improper payment and identify the minimum dollar amount.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Invoicing and Collections Section is responsible for the collection of outstanding debts in the case of individuals or legal entities for services rendered to government entities or for program benefits received incorrectly. Some of the non-contributory debts that originate because of ACUDEN's operations or functions are the following: Audit Reports - Questioned Costs, Improper Payments or benefits received without entitlement. Fiscal Monitoring Findings, Child Care Program Closure Reports. Non-covered spaces, non-compliance with enrollment and Head Start/Early Head Start Final Reports or returned checks. Regulation No. 44, "Existing non-tax debts in favor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico," of the Department of the Treasury, is the procedure used to carry out the collection action of the existing debts in favor of ACUDEN. This Regulation establishes the rules to be followed by Government Agencies when carrying out debt collection procedures. Objective To use all available means to collect debts in the most effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Law, Regulations and Rules in force promulgated by the Treasury Department or other governmental entities. Collection Procedures The following procedures are contained in paragraphs A, B, C, D and E, of Article V, of the Regulations: The request for initial collection is received and an Invoice for Collection (Model SC-724) is prepared. The debtor will be granted thirty (30) calendar days to make payment and (15) days to appeal. Both the original invoice and the copy must be approved and signed by the Finance Division Director. The original invoice is sent to the debtor and a file is prepared to include the collection request, letters sent, copies of payments received, if any, and copies of remittances and filed. If ten (10) business days after the due date stated on the invoice has passed without payment being received or a payment plan has been initiated and no action has been taken, the Director of the Finance Division will send a second notice, "Second Collection Action for Non-Contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071). This second collection notice must be sent with acknowledgement of receipt by mail or personal delivery and will indicate to the debtor the due date, nature and amount of the debt and the surcharges and accrued interest, if any. If payment is not initiated or the debt is not settled, the Director of the Finance Division will verify, in cases where the debtor is included in the Register of Subsidiaries of the PRIFAS Central Accounting System. If registered, the "Notice of Non-contributory Debts or Authorization to Cancel or Amend a Notice" (Form SC-776.1) will be prepared and sent to the Debt Section of the Central Accounting Area's Intervention Bureau. This notice, to deduct the debt from the payment or reimbursement made in favor of the debtor, pursuant to Section 9(j) of Act No. 230 of July 23, 1974, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Government Accounting Act. Rejected Checks Procedure In the case of rejected checks, the procedure shall be as provided in subsection F(1,2,3,4, and 5) of Article V. Subsection No. 1, establishes that it is the Reconciliation Division of the Treasury that the list of dishonored checks sent by Banco Popular is sent to the agencies. Subsection No. 2 sets forth the procedure to be followed when the debt is less than \$5,000.00, and collection efforts have been unsuccessful, as follows: The "Report of Checks Rejected by the Bank for which Collection Efforts Have Been Unsuccessful", (Form SC-1107) is prepared and sent to the

Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area to evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. This report must be sent with a copy of the file, including the returned check, a copy of the "Invoice for Collection", (Form SC-724), and the document "Second Collection Management of Non-contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071), so that the Treasury Area may evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. Item No. 3 concerns the procedures to be followed when the rejected check is successfully collected. In items 4 and 5, it is stated: Rejected checks sent for collection efforts may not remain in the possession of the Special Official Collector or Special Paying Officer for more than three (3) months. When making collection efforts, the agencies must exhaust all available resources prior to referring the cases to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area of the Department of the Treasury. Objection to the Payment of the Debt The following procedures are included in Article VI, Subparagraphs A, B and C of the Regulations: If the debtor files an objection to the payment of the debt, within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the Model SC-724 invoice, ACUDEN shall stop evaluating any collection action on the same. In cases where a second collection action is sent, the debtor will have ten (10) working days to object to it. If no notification is received, the case will continue to be processed. When the debtor objects to the payment of the debt, the Finance Director will study the case and notify the debtor in writing of the decision within twenty (20) working days from the date of receipt of the objection. If the debtor does not agree with the decision taken, he/she shall inform the Director of Finance of his/her reasons in writing within fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt of the communication. Subsection D provides the procedure to be followed when the debtor submits an appeal to the Director of Finance, and subsection E, the judicial collection procedure when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00. In this case, upon requesting objection to the invoice after the determination of the Director of Finance, the debtor will have the opportunity to file an appeal before the Adjudicatory Board of the Department of the Family.

- ☒ iii. Coordinate with and refer to the other state/territory agencies (e.g., state/territory collection agency, law enforcement agency).

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: ACUDEN's Legal Division, through a referral from the Finance Director, following subsection E, of Regulation # 44, will proceed to collect the debt through the Judiciary process when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00, and the Finance Division's collection efforts are unsuccessful. In this case, the file with the decision and its details is sent to the Puerto Rico Department of Justice.

- ☒ iv. Recover through repayment plans.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: Regulation # 44 establishes the terms of the Payment Plan, which may be granted by the Finance Director or the Nominating Authority. It establishes a first payment of 50% of the total amount due, and the other 50% in installments of a maximum of 12 months.

- ☒ v. Reduce payments in subsequent months.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: : In the request for the three-month funding it is adjusted to satisfy the unpaid tuition debt if there is an invoice to be collected for the current program year.

- ☒ vi. Recover through state/territory tax intercepts.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: A CCDF provider who files a collection action must comply with a repayment plan or satisfy in full payment of the debt to receive the delegation of federal funds

- ☒ vii. Recover through other means.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: n/a

- ☒ viii. Establish a unit to investigate and collect improper payments and describe the composition of the unit.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: The Invoicing and Collections Section is responsible for the collection of outstanding debts in the case of individuals or legal entities for services rendered to government entities or for program benefits received incorrectly. Some of the non-contributory debts that originate because of ACUDEN's operations or functions are the following: Audit Reports - Questioned Costs, Improper Payments or benefits received without entitlement. Fiscal Monitoring Findings, Child Care Program Closure Reports. Non-covered spaces, non-compliance with enrollment and Head Start/Early Head Start Final Reports or returned checks. Regulation No. 44, "Existing non-tax debts in favor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico," of the Department of the Treasury, is the procedure used to carry out the collection action of the existing debts in favor of ACUDEN. This Regulation establishes the rules to be followed by Government Agencies when carrying out debt collection procedures. Objective To use all available means to collect debts in the most effective manner and in accordance with the provisions of the Law, Regulations and Rules in force promulgated by the Treasury Department or other governmental entities. Collection Procedures The following procedures are contained in paragraphs A, B, C, D and E, of Article V, of the Regulations: The request for initial collection is received and an Invoice for Collection (Model SC-724) is prepared. The debtor will be granted thirty (30) calendar days to make payment and (15) days to appeal. Both the original invoice and the copy must be approved and signed by the Finance Division Director. The original invoice is sent to the debtor and a file is prepared to include the collection request, letters sent, copies of payments received, if any, and copies of remittances and filed. If ten (10) business days after the due date stated on the invoice has passed without payment being received or a payment plan has been initiated and no action has been taken, the Director of the Finance Division will send a second notice, "Second Collection Action for Non-Contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071). This second collection notice must be sent with acknowledgement of receipt by mail or personal delivery and will indicate to the debtor the due date, nature and amount of the debt and the surcharges and accrued interest, if any. If payment is not initiated or the debt is not settled, the Director of the Finance Division will verify, in cases where the debtor is included in the Register of Subsidiaries of the PRIFAS Central Accounting System. If registered, the "Notice of Non-contributory Debts or Authorization to Cancel or Amend a Notice" (Form SC-776.1) will be prepared and sent to the Debt Section of the Central Accounting Area's Intervention Bureau. This notice, to deduct the debt from the payment or reimbursement made in favor of the debtor, pursuant to Section 9(j) of Act No. 230 of July 23, 1974, as amended, known as the "Puerto Rico Government Accounting Act. Rejected Checks Procedure In the case of rejected checks, the procedure shall be as provided in subsection F(1,2,3,4, and 5) of Article V. Subsection No. 1, establishes that it is the Reconciliation Division of the Treasury that the list of dishonored checks sent by Banco Popular is sent to the agencies. Subsection No. 2 sets forth the procedure to be followed when the debt is less than \$5,000.00, and collection efforts have been unsuccessful, as follows: The "Report of Checks Rejected by the Bank for which Collection Efforts Have Been Unsuccessful", (Form SC-1107) is prepared and sent to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area to evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. This report must be sent with a copy of the file, including the returned check, a copy of the "Invoice for Collection", (Form SC-724), and the document "Second Collection Management of Non-contributory Debts", (Form SC-1071), so that the Treasury Area may evaluate whether the collection efforts were completed. Item No. 3 concerns the procedures to be followed when the rejected check is successfully collected. In items 4 and 5, it is stated: Rejected checks sent for collection efforts may not remain in the possession

of the Special Official Collector or Special Paying Officer for more than three (3) months. When making collection efforts, the agencies must exhaust all available resources prior to referring the cases to the Revenue Accounting Division of the Treasury Area of the Department of the Treasury. Objection to the Payment of the Debt The following procedures are included in Article VI, Subparagraphs A, B and C of the Regulations: If the debtor files an objection to the payment of the debt, within fifteen (15) working days following receipt of the Model SC-724 invoice, ACUDEN shall stop evaluating any collection action on the same. In cases where a second collection action is sent, the debtor will have ten (10) working days to object to it. If no notification is received, the case will continue to be processed. When the debtor objects to the payment of the debt, the Finance Director will study the case and notify the debtor in writing of the decision within twenty (20) working days from the date of receipt of the objection. If the debtor does not agree with the decision taken, he/she shall inform the Director of Finance of his/her reasons in writing within fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt of the communication. Subsection D provides the procedure to be followed when the debtor submits an appeal to the Director of Finance, and subsection E, the judicial collection procedure when the debt exceeds \$5,000.00. In this case, upon requesting objection to the invoice after the determination of the Director of Finance, the debtor will have the opportunity to file an appeal before the Adjudicatory Board of the Department of the Family

- ☐ ix. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:
Click or tap here to enter text.

8.1.7 What type of sanction will the Lead Agency place on clients and providers to help reduce improper payments due to program violations? Check and describe all that apply:

- ☒ a. Disqualify the client. If checked, describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for clients who are disqualified.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: *When a client is disqualified, the client will have the right to file an appeal before the Department of the Family's Adjudicative Board. The Adjudicative Board is guided by Regulation # 7757, dated October 5, 2009, Regulations to Establish Procedures for the Adjudication of Disputes before the Department of the Family's Adjudicative Board. The Board will provide an administrative hearing where both parties will be invited. The Board will then issue a decision after evaluating the allegations and evidence presented by both parties. If the service provider still does not agree with the Board's decision. The service provider may appeal the decision to the Puerto Rico Court of Appeals.*

- ☒ b. Disqualify the provider. If checked, describe this process, including a description of the appeal process for providers who are disqualified.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: *When a service provider is disqualified, he/she shall have the right to file an appeal before the Department of the Family's Adjudicative Board. The Adjudicative Board is governed by Regulation # 7757, dated October 5, 2009, Regulations to Establish Procedures for the Adjudication of Disputes before the Department of the Family Adjudicative Board. The Board will provide an administrative hearing where both parties will be invited. After evaluating the allegations and evidence presented by both parties, the Board will then issue a decision. If the service provider still does not agree with the Board's decision, they may file an appeal before the Puerto Rico Court of Appeals.*

- ☒ c. Prosecute criminally.

Describe the activities and the results of these activities: *ACUDEN's Legal Division may refer a service provider or customer to the Puerto Rico Department of Justice if the fraud situation demands it*

- ☐ d. Other. Describe the activities and the results of these activities:
[*Click or tap here to enter text.*](#)