

Proposed Additional Goal Statements for Washington's CCDF Plan

Background:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services's Administration for Children and Families (ACF) issues an application template for states to submit their Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Plan for CCDF funding and state activities 2011-2013.

Section 2.7.10, "Goals for the Next Biennium," asks Washington state "What are the Lead Agency's (DEL) goals for the administration of the CCDF subsidy program in the coming Biennium? For example, what progress does the State/Territory expect to make on continuing to improve services to parents and providers, continuity of care for children, improving outreach to parents and providers, building or expanding information technology systems, or revising rate setting policies or practices." Section 3.4.7. asks for goal statements on promoting Health and Safety and Quality Improvement Activities.

Over the past few months, a Steering Committee for development of the CCDF plan, made up of both DEL staff and other Early Learning professionals, including some ELAC members, has met several times. The May 17th draft response, written entirely by DEL staff, is the last one given to the CCDF steering committee's non-DEL employees. The entire response to this instruction on answering Section 2.7.10 of the federal application, handed out on May 17th **states in its entirety:**

"The goals for the coming biennium are improvement in customer services to parents and providers. The current call center environment has limitations on the volume of calls it can handle system wise and staff wise. DEL is working to resolve those issues which may end in DEL assuming oversight of the call centers from the DSHS. A study is currently underway to evaluate the impacts of 12 months authorizations to Head Start and state preschool programs, so expansion to a 12 month authorization will be reviewed. The subsidy system depends on legacy systems, some that are over 30 years old. DEL is looking at other systems that are more efficient and effective, along with the enhancements of an EBT implementation for parent and providers. Rate setting has been part of the WorkFirst oversight system, which may also change in the next two years. DEL would like to tie providers ability to receive subsidy with quality improvements, starting with five knowledge based requirements."

It seems important to expand Washington's goals section response to include statements to set selected broader goals that the state will set for 2011-2013. To do is merely following the grant instructions, especially in the areas for which the federal instructions ask to see a commitment to state planning to meet the goals it sets. Setting such goals does not commit the state to implement any specific policies or to spend a specific level of funds, and there is always the option to return to the federal ACF administrator of our CCDF plan and funds to ask for revisions to the Washington plan that is in currently in place.

For these reasons, I propose that ELAC adopt the following statement as a recommendation statement and forward it to Dr. Bette Hyde:

ELAC advises the Department of Early to include the following elements in the goal section of the CCDF Plan it submits to the federal Administration for Children and Youth:

1. During 2011-2013 Washington will conduct a study, with stakeholder and ELAC participation, on how it can reach the goal of expanding parents' access to quality child care by ensuring that subsidy rates ensure them access in their community to no less than 75 percent of providers in that community.
2. In order to assist parents in meeting their goal of economic self sufficiency, Washington state will study, with stakeholder and ELAC participation, how to identify sufficient funding to meet the goal of eliminating the waiting list for child care assistance that was implemented in 2011 for the first time in at least 20 years.
3. To improve the quality of child care services by providing programs the resources to hire and retain the most qualified staff, DEL will study, with stakeholder and ELAC participation, how to access additional resources to provide higher compensation and expanded professional development to early learning providers.

Submitted by John Bancroft, ELAC member, to ELAC on June 13, 2011