



How to Engage in the CCDF Planning Process

What is the State CCDF Planning Process?

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is the primary federal program specifically devoted to providing lower-income families with child care subsidies and funding for states to improve program quality. Every three years, states are required to submit for federal approval their CCDF Plan which outlines their child care policies and how they'll use federal funds to advance equitable access to affordable, high-quality child care. As part of the process to create these plans, states are required to provide at least one opportunity to receive public comment from child care stakeholders on their state's CCDF Plan. This is an important and unique opportunity for all advocates, including parents and providers, to spotlight the challenges that exist with the current child care system and make policy recommendations for the future.

Opportunities to Engage in the Process: All states must hold at least one hearing to enable the public to comment on the provisions in the CCDF Plan. Some states also conduct input surveys or hold pre-hearing listening sessions. Review [CCAoA's state CCDF Plan hearing tracker](#) to learn more about what opportunities are available in your state. While the opportunities and timing for each state might be a little bit different, there are two primary ways in which advocates can participate in the process.

1. **Testify Verbally at a Public Hearing:** Testifying verbally is a powerful opportunity to speak directly about policies and investments that will address the needs of families and providers in the state's CCDF Plan. Verbal testimony is especially effective if you speak about your own personal experiences.

Time to speak at a public hearing is often limited, so it is helpful to practice your testimony and be sure to include your key points at the beginning. If you run out of time, you can submit your remaining comments as written testimony.

2. **Submit Written Testimony:** In addition to the public hearing, many states also offer the opportunity to submit written testimony. This is a great opportunity to still participate in the process if you are unable to attend the public hearing and/or you have longer, more detailed comments you would like to submit.

For support on what to include in your testimony, check out our [Messaging Resource](#) for templates and guidance on creating your testimony.

Follow Up with Us: For any questions or to let us know about your experience participating in the CCDF Planning Process, email takeaction@usa.childcareaware.org.