

**Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI)**  
**Statement of Interest: Opportunity to Participate in the TELI Collaborative**

**Background**

Tribal early childhood programs, including child care, Head Start, and home visiting, often operate in silos, with different funding sources, requirements, policies, and leadership structures. For example, a tribe's Head Start program may be well-resourced, while that same tribe's child care program may be severely understaffed and lack the needed materials to serve young children. The staff for these two programs may not have a relationship, and as a result, they miss opportunities to work together that would lead to better outcomes for tribal children. Tribal communities and their leadership often indicate investment in tribal capacity to foster more integrated early childhood systems is needed but not easy, even under the most favorable of circumstances. Such investments take time and resources. The recent funding increases in the Tribal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) program present an opportunity for tribes to enhance their early childhood systems to meet their goals, promote child development, and support integration of services to improve child and family outcomes. Tribes have an opportunity now to leverage the increased Tribal CCDF resources to sustainably invest in coordinated early childhood systems in a focused and intentional way.

**The Tribal Early Learning Initiative**

From 2012 to 2017, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) partnered with eight tribes to carry out a [Tribal Early Learning Initiative \(TELI\)](#). Since the conclusion of the TELI, tribes have continued to indicate an interest in new TELI efforts. ACF is offering interested tribes the opportunity to be the next generation to participate in TELI. The TELI offers tribes the opportunity to use Tribal CCDF program funds to support coordinated child care and early childhood services for TELI efforts in your community.

A Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI) effort in a tribal community is designed to:

- Better coordinate tribal early learning and development programs, including child care, Head Start, preschool, home visiting, and other services
- Create and support seamless, high-quality early childhood systems
- Raise the quality of services to children and families across the prenatal-to-kindergarten-entry continuum
- Identify and break down barriers to collaboration and systems improvement

This year, tribes have the chance to participate in a new TELI, building on lessons learned from past ACF TELI efforts. Tribes interested in investing in early childhood systems building through the TELI will have the opportunity to participate in one of two groups differing in terms of the commitments needed from tribes and the supports provided by ACF: 1) TELI Collaborative and 2) TELI Network. These opportunities are described in the Office of Child Care Information Memorandum of April 1, 2022 ([CCDF-ACF-IM-2022-01](#)), along with details about how Tribal CCDF Lead Agencies could use Tribal CCDF resources to support TELI activities in their community.

## Participation in the TELI Collaborative

Tribes may submit a statement of interest for participation in the TELI Collaborative, which will be a peer learning community dedicated to supporting tribes to build tribal early childhood systems by leveraging their Tribal CCDF funds. Tribes interested in the TELI Collaborative will commit to working in partnership with ACF to develop and carry out their TELI plans and learn from one another to maximize opportunities to implement strong early childhood systems. Tribes will also demonstrate a commitment to involving tribal leaders and leaders from key tribal early childhood programs (including AI/AN Head Start/Early Head Start, Tribal CCDF, and Tribal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV), as applicable) in the TELI work. Finally, tribes will commit to developing their systems in partnership with community members, parents, elders, and families. Up to up **eight tribes** will participate in the TELI Collaborative, and these tribes will receive intensive support over a 3-year period, including:

- Ongoing technical assistance as part of a peer learning network/learning collaborative. TA and resources will be provided to the group as well as to the individual tribal communities.
- Direct support from federal staff and decision-makers across the three key tribal early childhood programs (as applicable), as well as other relevant federal partners. ACF is committed to ensuring that federal program specialists collaborate across offices and provide guidance to help remove barriers and reduce administrative burden, funding restrictions, and other impediments to creative early childhood systems building.
- Annual meetings (ideally in-person) to establish and maintain the learning collaborative, support ongoing peer learning and sharing, and receive TA and guidance.
- A joint site visit (if it can be done safely and respect tribal protocols) to each tribe from ACF staff from the relevant programs, along with TA providers, to explore opportunities for collaboration and identify and address barriers to coordination and systems building.

## TELI Collaborative Statement of Interest

Tribes may respond by submitting a Statement of Interest, via the Tribal CCDF Lead Agency, to participate in the TELI Collaborative. ***Tribal CCDF Lead Agencies must also separately submit the “TELI Appendix” (Appendix 2 to the FY 2023-2025 Tribal CCDF Plan Preprint) to receive approval to use Tribal CCDF funds to conduct TELI activities.*** The due date for both the TELI Collaborative Statement of Interest and the TELI Appendix is **July 1, 2022**. The documents will be reviewed concurrently by ACF. No more than eight tribes will participate in the Collaborative, due to the limited availability of intensive technical assistance resources.

Participation in the TELI is completely voluntary. Submitting a Statement of Interest indicates that a tribe is interested in participating in the Collaborative and helps ACF determine the kinds of supports you are interested in receiving from ACF. The responses to the questions are therefore solely intended to be used by ACF to inform the types supports needed by tribes. If you are interested in participating in the TELI Collaborative, please provide the following.

### ITEM 1: Background, Goals, and Context

Please respond to the following questions (no more than 2-3 pages).

1. What are your tribe or organization's goals around coordinating and integrating your early childhood programs? Why is your tribe or organization interested in the TELI Collaborative opportunity in particular?
2. What are the resources or strengths your tribe or organization possesses that will be an asset to the success of the TELI in your community(ies), and to the TELI Collaborative overall?
3. What are some challenges to collaboration across the early childhood programs in your community(ies)?
4. Please describe the level or commitment and investment of the programs that will be partnering in your TELI effort. Have leaders from the participating programs met to discuss this opportunity? What is each partner willing to contribute to make this effort successful?
5. Please identify examples of technical assistance you would like to receive as part of your participation in the TELI Collaborative. Technical assistance could be peer sharing opportunities with other Collaborative partners, assistance in identifying approaches to working with early childhood partners within your tribe, and strategies around goal setting and early childhood systems integration.

### ITEM 2: Statement of Support from Tribal or Organizational Leadership

Please attach a statement of support from tribal or organizational leadership (could be a tribal resolution or some other letter of support) for the community(ies)'s participation in the TELI Collaborative. If more than one community will be involved, statements should be provided that indicate support from all communities.