



Office of the Executive Director

Navajo Division for Children and Family Services



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DIVISION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES PROVIDES UPDATE ON 477 PLAN

Deputy Director Sonlatsa Jim provided an update to the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) on the Public Law 102-477 Plan ("477 Plan") that the Division for Children and Family Services (DCFS) is implementing and going live as of October 1, 2025.

The 477 Plan consolidates federal programs under the Division into a single comprehensive plan and budget, in line with the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act. The act is a federal initiative to reduce unemployment with workforce development and job training in tribal communities. It allows tribal governments to consolidate federal programs into one plan which will streamline administrative requirements, consolidate budgets and reporting, and reduce costs.

What the 477 Plan means for the Division for Children and Family Services members is that they will receive comprehensive, wrap-around services. A welcome team will receive all callers and visitors at any DCFS field office. The team members will engage with callers and visitors to determine which DCFS department or program will receive the referral. This will result in improved services that address challenges such as lack of communication and follow-up with clients. Services will no longer be conducted by individual programs without internal coordination.

Welcome team members have been receiving training on the welcome script, process and customer service so that they will be prepared to implement the plan on October 1, 2025.

DCFS has also implemented the Tribal Assistance System as its case management system across the Division to ensure accuracy and prevent errors. This will allow DCFS staff to track members and services across all programs.

A 477 Plan Support Section within the DCFS will be created with permanent positions, such as a program manager, accountants, contract analyst, and quality assurance specialist. The plan of operation and organizational chart for the support section is being finalized for review and approval.

One of the benefits of the 477 Plan is that funds will be carried forward until expended and will not revert back to the funding source at the end of the fiscal year. The plan will provide more flexibility for the Division to fulfill its goals of providing prompt and courteous service in the spirit of k'é.

DCFS Program Managers were at the committee meeting to answer questions on the process and to hear concerns from the HEHSC members. One concern is that the Navajo Treatment Center for Children and Families (NTCCF) has not been approved to implement the 477 Plan. However, staff let the committee know that they are in communication with the Indian Health Service to get the NTCCF on board.



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Another concern by the HEHSC members was regarding the salary adjustment for program staff. DCFS staff informed the committee members that the salary adjustments are moving forward with the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Personnel Management.

The DCFS 477 Plan was approved on October 9, 2024, by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Naa'bik'iyáti' Committee approved the contract and annual funding agreement on June 12, 2025. President Buu Nygren signed the contract and agreement on June 19, 2025, and the BIA approved on June 26, 2025.

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