



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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Program Performance Summary Report

To: Authorizing Official/Board Chairperson

Mr. John Goetz

Early Learning Ventures

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From: Responsible HHS Official

Date: 04/24/2020

Dr. Deborah Bergeron

Director, Office of Head Start

From January 13, 2020 to January 17, 2020, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area One (FA1) monitoring review of the Early Learning Ventures Early Head Start program. This report contains information about the grantee's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or Public Law 110-134, Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your governing body, policy council, parents, and staff for their engagement in the review process. The FA1 review allows the OHS to understand how programs are progressing in providing services in the 5-year grant cycle. The report includes the performance measures used to understand grantee progress towards program goals. You can use this report to identify where your program was able to describe progress toward implementing program services that promote quality outcomes for children and families. Please contact your Regional Office for guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Your Regional Office will follow up on the content of this report and can work with you to identify resources to support your program's continuous improvement.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT

Ms. Cheryl Lutz, Regional Program Manager

Mrs. Judy Williams, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director

Mr. Tim Garcia, Early Head Start Director

Glossary of Terms

Opportunity for Continuous Improvement (OCI)	An OCI is identified when the grantee is determined compliant in an area; however, through intentional, continuous improvement strategies, the agency has the opportunity to enhance overall program quality.
Area of Concern (AOC)	An area for which the agency needs to improve performance. These issues should be discussed with the grantee's Regional Office of Head Start for possible technical assistance.
Area of Noncompliance (ANC)	An area for which the agency is out of compliance with Federal requirements (including but not limited to the Head Start Act or one or more of the regulations) in one or more areas of performance. This status requires a written timeline of correction and possible technical assistance or guidance from the grantee's program specialist. If not corrected within the specified timeline, this status becomes a deficiency.
Deficiency	<p>As defined in the Head Start Act, the term "deficiency" means:</p> <p>(A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff; (ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations; (iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management; (iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter; (v) loss of legal status (as determined by the Secretary) or financial viability, loss of permits, debarment from receiving Federal grants or contracts, or the improper use of Federal funds; or (vi) failure to meet any other Federal or State requirement that the agency has shown an unwillingness or inability to correct, after notice from the Secretary, within the period specified; <p>(B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or</p> <p>(C) an unresolved area of noncompliance.</p>

Performance Summary

Service Area	Grant Number(s)	Compliance Level	Applicable Standards	Timeframe for Correction
Designing Quality Education and Child Development Program Services	08HP000175 08HP000279	Area of Concern	1302.91(e)(1)	Follow up with Regional Office for support



Program Design and Management

Program Design

The grantee's program design and structure takes into account community strengths and needs.

Program Management

The grantee has an approach for providing effective management and oversight of all program areas and fiduciary responsibilities.

Program Governance

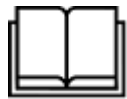
The grantee maintains a formal structure for program governance that includes a governing body, a policy council (or policy committee for delegates), and parent committees.

Program Design and Management Highlight

The grantee designed its Early Head Start program based on the characteristics of the community. Early Head Start centers and partnership sites were located in areas with the highest level of poverty and the greatest need for infant and toddler care. Different program options were provided to support family schedules, allowing them to choose the option that best fit their needs. Selection criteria were updated based on the trending needs of families, particularly families experiencing homelessness. By providing a choice of program options and adjusting selection criteria, the grantee demonstrated its responsiveness to the identified needs of families.

The grantee ensured effective management through the implementation of a data management system to track and report information for each content area. This data system was used in collaboration with its Early Head Start-Child Care Partners to unify the collection of data. The Management Team met monthly to review, analyze, and discuss the collected and reported data. They used the information to evaluate their performance related to regulations, licensing requirements, and progress in achieving their goals. They identified areas for improvement at the classroom, site, and program levels. The grantee's Child Care Specialists met monthly with Partner Directors to review data and contract objectives and create continuous improvement plans to support addressing identified concerns. The Management Team had an effective process for collecting, monitoring, and analyzing data to provide effective oversight for each content area.

The governing body's structure and expertise provided effective oversight of the program. The composition of the Board of Directors included a member from each of the six counties the grantee served, including members with early childhood education, finance, and legal expertise. The policy council structure consisted of members who were current and former parents, as well as community members from each of the six counties. The grantee leveraged the expertise of the policy council and the Board to support the program in meeting regulations and ensuring quality services were provided. For example, one member of the Board worked in the early childhood department at a local community college and aided the program in identifying coursework that qualified for an associate's or bachelor's degree. To make certain the governing bodies were equipped to provide appropriate oversight of the Head Start program; they received annual training on their roles and responsibilities, Roberts Rules of Order, and the program's comprehensive services. The ongoing training they received during their meetings provided the governing bodies with the knowledge to interpret the program data they received. The structure and expertise of the governing body ensured they were able to make informed decisions about the program.



Designing Quality Education and Child Development Program Services

Alignment with School Readiness

The grantee's approach to school readiness aligns with the expectations of receiving schools, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and state early learning standards.

Effective and Intentional Teaching Practices

The grantee has strategies to ensure teaching practices promote progress toward school readiness.

Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness

The grantee has an approach for ensuring teachers are prepared to implement the curriculum and support children's progress toward school readiness, but improvement is needed.

AOC 1302.91(e)(1)

Timeframe for Correction: Follow up with Regional Office for support

1302.91 Staff qualifications and competency requirements. (e) Child and family services staff. (1) Early Head Start center-based teacher qualification requirements. As prescribed in section 645A(h) of the Act, a program must ensure center-based teachers that provide direct services to infants and toddlers in Early Head Start centers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or comparable credential, and have been trained or have equivalent coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

The Early Education Manager stated there were 34 of 129 Early Head Start center-based teachers for grant number 08HP000175 who did not have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or comparable credential. In addition, 41 of 56 Early Head Start center-based teachers for grant number 08HP000279 did not have a CDA credential. All of the teachers had Professional Development Plans in place and were working toward obtaining their CDA credential with expected completion dates between February and November 2020, depending on their individual date of hire.

Home-based Program Services

Not Applicable.



Designing Quality Health Program Services

Child Health Status and Care

The grantee has an approach for ensuring the delivery of high-quality health services.

Safety Practices

The grantee implements a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments and ensuring all staff have complete background checks.

Designing Quality Health Program Services Highlight

The grantee had a process for receiving medical and dental information throughout the year and coordinated with families to make sure children were up to date on all needed health and dental services. This process began during enrollment when staff met with parents to determine their child's health insurance status, their medical and dental providers, and to obtain documentation of medical and dental exams. The grantee partnered with a Mesa County Health Department nurse to review the children's medical records to determine each child's health status. The health and dental information was entered into the program's database system and regularly monitored by the grantee and Child Care Partner staff to identify children with current or upcoming health needs. These health needs were then shared with families, and support was offered to assist with making and keeping appointments. The grantee had effective practices to ensure children received needed health and dental services.

The grantee established partnerships to develop strategies to maintain healthy and safe environments. The grantee partnered with the Mesa County Public Health Department to create a comprehensive health and safety checklist to confirm they were collecting information that supported children's health and safety. The checklist was a compilation of information from licensing regulations, Head Start Program Performance Standards, and Caring for Our Children Basics. Staff, including partner Directors, used the checklist to monitor various health and safety items on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual basis and to create plans for improvement. The grantee also partnered with Training and Technical Assistance to implement Creating a Culture of Safety across all partnership sites to assist all staff in understanding the importance of providing healthy and safe environments. Grantee and partner staff received training in Creating a Culture of Safety and had quarterly meetings to discuss its implementation. The grantee established effective practices to support health and safety.



Designing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services

Family Well-being

The grantee has an approach for collaborating with families to support family well-being.

Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports

The grantee has an approach for providing services that strengthen parenting skills.

Designing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services Highlight

The grantee strengthened its process for supporting the well-being of families and their engagement in Early Head Start. Initially, as staff members and families completed the strength and needs assessment, they were required to complete a 15-page document. Staff felt families were reluctant to engage in the process because it felt cumbersome and clinical. The grantee created a committee and developed a family strength and needs assessment using the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework. This condensed assessment allowed staff to facilitate conversations with families about their hopes and dreams. Families reported the new process took less time and yet felt more engaging and personal. To further support families, the grantee recently added the Conscious Discipline parenting curriculum. Conscious Discipline offered strategies to develop social-emotional learning and encouraged the home-to-school connection. In conjunction with this initiative, the grantee integrated Conscious Discipline into parent-teacher conferences, home visits, and other events involving families. These activities increased families' engagement in family services and supported their well-being.



Developing Effective Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) Strategies and Fiscal Infrastructure

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

At least 10% of the grantee's total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA or the grantee has received a waiver.

The grantee enrolls children or pregnant women who are categorically eligible or who meet defined income-eligibility requirements.

Enrollment Verification

The grantee maintains and tracks full enrollment.

Fiscal Infrastructure, Capacity, and Responsiveness

The grantee's fiscal staff have the qualifications needed to provide oversight of the grant.

The grantee has a budget development and revision process that includes stakeholders and appropriate approvals, and ensures continuous alignment with program design, goals, and objectives.

Developing Effective Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) Strategies and Fiscal Infrastructure Highlight

The grantee created an ERSEA system to ensure it enrolled eligible children and families. The program developed criteria for selection, which included a point system used for determining which children had the greatest need for EHS services. The criteria incorporated the Colorado Self-Sufficiency Standards to make certain they were representative of current community challenges. Each child's application received varying numbers of points depending on the family's circumstances. Families wishing to complete an application at a Child Care Partner site were referred to the grantee's Child Care Specialist. The Specialist worked with the families to gather required documents and helped them complete the application. After meeting with the families, the Specialist completed the initial eligibility determination and submitted it to a Manager. Eligibility determinations were then reviewed by the Manager to ensure the eligibility determinations were accurate. The program created a process prioritizing the enrollment of children according to need.

The grantee implemented practices to provide effective financial oversight of the program funds. The grantee's financial department staff tracked grant funds in the Abila MIP accounting software. The software enabled the grantee to track and record each funding source separately, allocate costs based on their cost allocation plan, and create reports to be used by the staff and governing bodies. The Chief Financial Officer and accounting professionals from NFP Partners shared financial management needs. The Chief Financial Officer reviewed all revenues and expenditures to verify requirements were met. The NFP Partner staff entered transactions and completed financial reports. Revenues and expenditure reports were reviewed by the Management Team, the Board of Directors, and the policy council monthly and were used to inform the budget planning process. In addition to the financial reports, the governing bodies and staff reviewed the needs of the grantee's partner sites. Based on the data obtained during these reviews and the Self-Assessment, the grantee developed a preliminary budget. After a thorough review and discussion with the policy council and the Board, the initial budget was finalized. These practices included in the grantee's robust financial management system ensured it safeguarded Federal funds.

----- End of Report -----