



The New Head Start Program Performance Standards – Practical Options for Developing Your Implementation Process

“We know you’re thinking about this and we’re thinking about this too!”

Introduction

The release of the new *Head Start Program Performance Standards* is both an historic event and an exciting time of innovation and opportunity at Head Start. The National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (PMFO) will offer a menu of options to support grantees’ development of “a program-wide approach for effective and timely implementation” of the new *Program Performance Standards*, consistent with Section 1302.103. The management systems wheel and its complementary guiding questions resource provides a way for programs to organize their thinking as they implement their standards planning activities.

Key OHS/PMFO/National Center Resources for Your Implementation Process

Available Now:

- Head Start Program Performance Standards Showcase
- Management Systems Wheel and the *Head Start Management Systems: Guiding Questions*

Coming Soon:

- *Head Start Management Systems: Guiding Questions for Implementing the Head Start Program Performance Standards*
- Implementation Science Framework
- A series of performance standards update videos in multimedia formats (e.g. new information that must be shared with the governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council)
- A series of webinars on selected HSPPS “Hot Topics” (e.g., how data informs planning)
- A series of tip sheets on key process topics (e.g., flow chart supporting facilities management)
- Key resources on the ECLKC that are being updated, including Head Start A to Z, fiscal resources, and the *Foundations for Excellence* planning document
- National Center content presentations through the lens of the new standards at regional professional development events

Things Agencies Can Do

If you have questions about implementing the new standards, we suggest the following considerations:

- Read the preamble to the performance standards as it reviews the considerations made in developing the new standards - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/docs/preamble-part1.pdf>
- Refer to the Head Start Act as a complementary document to the new *Head Start Program Performance Standards* - <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/head-start-act>
- Consult with your program specialist if you have questions
- Remember regional office resources as well as the T/TA system, which includes the national centers
- Consider a standards implementation process — task functions and process might include:

- **Exploration Stage**
 - Senior management — Key function: focus on overall approach and key timelines — Reference: Compliance Table — <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/docs/compliance-table-508.pdf>
 - Formation of staff content teams based on relevant areas (Parts 1302 – 1305) — Key function: ensures each standards content area is understood within an agency (e.g., education staff address 1302 Subpart C; fiscal staff address 1303) — these teams can also focus on both staff and volunteer management (where applicable)
 - Focus on leadership coordination — senior management engages governing body and Policy Council (Part 1301) — Key function: examining/revising policies and structures to be consistent with standards; this could be especially helpful if an advisory board is used in relation to a governing body
- **Installation Stage**
 - Each task team could use the guiding questions document as a guide
 - Each task team could make recommendations on needed procedural and/or budget adjustments (e.g., a comprehensive review and planning process around standards implementation)

Suggestions for Further Action Steps

- **Installation Stage** (continued)
 - Set up periodic check-in meetings with task teams addressing the following:
 - Where is our program in relation to the standards for a given area (e.g., program governance, program operations, administrative and financial requirements, etc.)?
 - Probing questions may include:
 - Where is the program strong?
 - What area(s) need further attention?
 - What specific actions should be taken?
 - What are the specific timelines and/or financial costs for these actions?
 - Develop ongoing steps for long-term benchmarks (e.g., considerations around extending duration and/or slot conversion/reduction based on community needs)
- **Initial Implementation Stage**
 - Based on program leadership and task team recommendations and intake data, programs strengthen their management systems
 - Based on task team recommendations (where applicable), leadership introduces course corrections needed to fully move toward implementation
- **Full Implementation Stage**
 - Programs use data to implement and move forward with new practices guided by HSPPS
 - Programs positioned to cite key achievements over the grant period.