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PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO: All Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees, Including Delegate Agencies, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grantees, and State Collaboration Grantees

SUBJECT: Supplemental Funds Available to Extend Duration of Services in Head Start and Early Head Start

INSTRUCTION:

The Office of Head Start (OHS) announces the availability of approximately \$294 million to be awarded for the purpose of increasing the total annual hours of high-quality early education services offered to children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start center-based and family child care programs. This supplemental funding is being made available under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016 (Pub.L. 114-113). OHS solicits applications from existing Head Start and Early Head Start grantees that do not provide services equivalent to a full school day and full school year for 40 percent or more of their Head Start center-based participants, do not provide continuous services for all of their family child care participants or Early Head Start center-based participants, or wish to convert slots from locally designed or combination options to center-based program schedules for longer service duration. Over 90 percent of existing grantees that currently do not serve all of their Head Start children for at least 1,020 hours are eligible to apply for these funds. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) expects to award funds to grantees eligible under this Program Instruction in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories, pending a fundable application. Subject to appropriations, funds awarded would become part of a grantee’s base funding in future years.

Background

Decades of scientific research documents the strong and lasting impact of high-quality early learning experiences on child outcomes. Head Start’s mission is to promote the school readiness of young children from low-income families. Research suggests that having high-quality, full school day and full school year care is particularly important for low-income children to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Based on this research, OHS is working to expand the number of children who participate in full school day and full school year or continuous programs.

Specifically, research on extended day programs for young children, full school day preschool, full school day kindergarten, and effective teaching and curricular practices strongly point to the

inadequacy of program schedules that offer the current Head Start minimum of 448 annual hours in achieving meaningful child outcomes. Head Start children need more learning time in high quality programs than is provided by the Head Start minimum duration standards in order to prepare them for success later in school and in life. It is very difficult for half-day programs to provide sufficient time for teachers to conduct learning activities and intentional instruction in small group and one-on-one interactions in the areas of skill development experts believe are important to later school success. Extending the duration of Head Start programs also enables greater alignment to full school day/full school year kindergarten and the growing number of full school day/full school year state preschool programs.

In addition, research on summer learning loss and attendance demonstrates the importance of extending the number of annual hours provided in early childhood education settings, including Head Start. Learning loss can be even greater for children from low-income families.

Although research does not indicate a specific threshold of hours per day or days per year, there is strong and mounting evidence that Head Start children need greater exposure to high-quality early learning experiences than is provided under Head Start minimum duration standards in order to support strong outcomes.

Additionally, research indicates that consistent and uninterrupted relationships with responsive and sensitive caregivers is critical to healthy social and emotional development. This is particularly true for infants and toddlers. While most Early Head Start programs provide this longer duration, increasing the number of annual hours provided in all Early Head Start programs will promote secure adult-child attachment for more children to enable learning in the earliest years.

Extending the number of annual hours provided in early childhood education settings—whether Head Start or Early Head Start—also yields important benefits to working families.

Purpose

The purpose of this funding is to provide access to full school year and full school day programming in all Head Start communities, and continuous services for all Early Head Start families, by supporting grantees in extending the program day and/or year for more children.

These funds can be used to support a myriad of center-based program models with varying hours per day and days per year, as long as the program provides services for **1,020 hours of planned class operations over the course of a minimum of eight months per year** for Head Start and **1,380 hours of planned class operations per year** for Early Head Start.

Additionally, grantees may increase service duration for their **Head Start and Early Head Start family child care slots to 1,380 hours of planned class operations**. “Hours of planned class operations” is defined as hours when children are scheduled to attend. Professional development, trainings, orientations, teacher planning, data analysis, parent-teacher conferences, home visits, classroom sanitation, and transportation do not count toward the hours of planned class operations.

The goal of these funds is to increase the proportion of a grantee’s Head Start center-based slots operating for 1,020 annual hours, Early Head Start center-based slots operating for 1,380 annual hours, and Head Start and Early Head Start family child care slots operating for 1,380 annual

hours. Head Start grantees may apply for funding to increase the share of Head Start center-based slots that meet the 1,020 hours annual threshold to up to 40 percent of their center-based slots, though available funding may mean that the grantee will be awarded funding to increase service duration for a somewhat smaller share. Grantees with Early Head Start center-based slots and with Head Start and Early Head Start family child care slots may apply for funding to increase the duration of all of these slots to the 1,380 hours threshold.

Voluntary Application

Grantees that receive these funds must provide high-quality, comprehensive, and continuous early care and education for preschoolers and/or infants and toddlers in center-based and family child care settings. These funds cannot be used for expansion of Head Start or Early Head Start enrollment.

Application for these funds is voluntary.

Eligibility

Determining Eligibility

Eligibility criteria for Head Start and Early Head Start grantees, including American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) grantees and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) grantees, are described in this section. For all grantees, eligibility according to these criteria will be determined using the data submitted by the grantee in the Program Schedule tab of the most recent annual Grant Application in the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES). Eligibility for grantees that successfully competed and received awards since July 1, 2015 and have not yet submitted an annual continuation application will be determined based on the level of services approved in the competitive application.

Grantees Eligible for Funding

Head Start. **Head Start grantees that operate less than 40 percent of their center-based funded enrollment** for a full school day and full school year schedule (1,020 hours of planned class operations over the course of a minimum of eight months per year) are eligible to apply. Applicants must propose to provide 1,020 annual hours of planned class operations for up to the number of slots needed to operate 40 percent of their Head Start center-based funded enrollment for this service duration. For example, a grantee that currently operates 20 percent of its center-based funded enrollment for a full school day and full school year (1,020 hours of planned class operations) may apply to operate up to an additional 20 percent of its funded enrollment at this service level. Applications to provide services for fewer than eight months per year will not be approved.

These funds may be used to convert Head Start slots from combination or locally designed program options to a center-based option and a full school day and full school year schedule (1,020 annual hours of planned class operations). If any current combination or locally designed option Head Start slots are proposed for conversion, these slots will be counted toward the grantee's Head Start center-based funded enrollment for the purposes of determining the percentage of center-based slots proposed to operate at 1,020 annual hours. For example, if a grantee currently has 70 center-based slots and 30 combination option slots and proposes to convert all 30 combination slots to center-based and 1,020 annual hours, then—if none of its 70 existing center-based slots currently operate for 1,020 annual hours—the grantee could also apply to increase duration for as many as 10 of its current center-based slots to 1,020 hours so that 40 center-based slots would operate for 1,020 hours out of a total of 100 center-based slots, equaling 40 percent.

Funds may also be used to increase service duration to 1,380 annual hours of planned class operations for up to 100 percent of grantees' Head Start family child care-funded enrollment. We are allowing funds to be used to increase service duration to this higher threshold for Head Start-funded children in family child care because this program option serves children in mixed age groups that include infants and toddlers who attend for a longer duration. Head Start family child care slots are not counted toward a grantee's center-based funded enrollment for the purposes of determining the percentage of Head Start center-based slots proposed to operate at 1,020 annual hours.

AIAN and MSHS grantees are eligible to apply under the same conditions described above. However, MSHS grantees may apply to provide services for fewer than eight months per year.

Early Head Start. **Early Head Start grantees that operate less than 100 percent of their center-based funded enrollment** at 1,380 annual hours of planned class operations are eligible to apply. Funding may be used to lengthen services for up to 100 percent of Early Head Start center-based slots not currently operating for 1,380 annual hours of planned class operations. Grantees wishing to apply must propose to provide 1,380 annual hours of planned class operations.

These funds may be used to convert Early Head Start slots from combination or locally designed program options to continuous Early Head Start center-based services (1,380 annual hours of planned class operations). See the description in the Head Start section above for more information.

Funds may also be used to increase service duration to 1,380 annual hours of planned class operations for Early Head Start family child care funded enrollment.

AIAN and MSHS grantees are eligible to apply under the same conditions described above.

Grantees Not Eligible for Funding

Due to the limited funding available, Head Start grantees currently operating 40 percent or more of their center-based funded enrollment at 1,020 annual hours of planned class operations, Early Head Start grantees currently operating 100 percent of their center-based funded enrollment at 1,380 annual hours of planned class operations, and Head Start and Early Head Start grantees currently operating 100 percent of their family child care funded enrollment at 1,380 annual hours of planned class operations are not eligible to apply for these funds. The president's fiscal year (FY) 2017 budget requests funding to continue expanding the number of children who can attend Head Start for a full school day and year. If that funding is provided, then in the future, a larger set of grantees will be able to continue to increase their full school day and year and/or continuous program offerings.

How to Apply

HSES Duration Supplement Amendment

Applicants must complete the Duration Supplement Amendment in HSES. Additional technical guidance is available on the relevant pages of the amendment.

Content of Applications

Applicants must address the following requirements in their application. The Application and Budget Justification Narrative should not exceed 20 pages, double-spaced in Times New Roman, 12-point font. Applications should include a Table of Contents.

Application Narrative. All applicants must describe the number of center-based and/or family child care program schedules they currently operate, as well as the annual hours of planned class operations provided (as defined in the Purpose section), the number of classrooms, and the number of children (funded enrollment) served in each program schedule.

Current Operations. Applicants must provide evidence of the total proportion of currently funded slots meeting the equivalent of 1,020 hours per year for Head Start center-based programs, 1,380 hours per year for Early Head Start center-based programs, and Head Start and Early Head Start family child care programs by number and percentage.

Approach. Head Start center-based grantees should use their community assessment and current program schedules to propose an approach that transitions an appropriate proportion (for a total of up to 40 percent) of their current Head Start center-based funded enrollment to a full school day and full school year program schedule (1,020 annual hours and a minimum of eight months per year) by extending the program day and/or year.

Early Head Start center-based and Head Start and Early Head Start family child care grantees should use their community assessment and current program schedules to propose an approach that transitions up to 100 percent of these slots that are not currently receiving 1,380 annual hours of planned class operations to a continuous program providing 1,380 annual hours.

Implementation Plan. Applicants must include an implementation plan that describes their proposed process for transitioning program operations, staff, and families to a longer service duration. This implementation plan must include a timeline to be fully operational. OHS expects that all applicants will be fully operational at the increased service duration no later than the beginning of the 2017-2018 program year, if not sooner.

Budget and Budget Justification. Applicants must include a detailed 12-month budget (in the HSES Budget tab) and a narrative budget justification that estimate **only the supplemental funds** necessary to support the incremental ongoing operating costs for the additional hours of service for the funded enrollment for which they propose to increase service duration. The budget justification must describe the intended use of the requested funding. Applicants should only include costs associated with extending services offered to the proportion of their slots transitioning to full school day and full school year and/or continuous services. OHS understands that scale-up activities may be necessary prior to full implementation of the increased duration. Applicants must ensure the funding level requested is adequate to support the full array of staffing and infrastructure for successful implementation of full school day and full school year and/or continuous services.

Reasonable and Allowable Costs. Examples of reasonable and allowable costs include the purchase, renovation, rental, and maintenance of additional facilities; ongoing purchases of classroom supplies; expenses for staff providing increased service duration; and professional development to support staff transitioning to a longer service duration.

These grant funds cannot be used to cover other program costs not associated with extending services offered for the proportion of slots they intend to transition to full school day and full school year services. **These funds cannot be used for expansion of Head Start or Early Head Start enrollment.** These funds cannot be used to provide home-based services or to convert home-based slots to center-based services. Costs incurred for grant application preparation are not considered an allowable use of funds and may not be included in the project budget or budget justification.

Funds awarded to increase the total annual hours of planned class operations must not supplant existing subsidies or other funding.

Start-up Costs. Start-up costs may be requested by an applicant in addition to the base operating supplemental funds. Examples of start-up activities are facility renovations or purchase, initial purchase of classroom supplies, licensing, background checks for additional staff, etc. Estimates for start-up costs must be easily identified as a separate budget in the Budget and Budget Justification section of the application. Applicants requesting start-up funds in addition to the 12-month budget must include start-up costs in the duration supplemental amendment application SF-424A.

Approval of start-up costs is not guaranteed; they are negotiated at the time of award and are based on reasonableness, necessity, and the availability of funds. The incurrence of start-up costs in anticipation of an award is done at the applicant's own risk and imposes no obligation on OHS either to make an award or to increase the amount of the approved budget if an award is made for less than the amount anticipated and is inadequate to cover the start-up costs incurred. It is possible that OHS may honor start-up costs by reducing the base amount of the award to include these costs.

Training and Technical Assistance.

Grantee training and technical assistance (T/TA) set-asides will not increase under this appropriation. However, consistent with current budgeting authority, grantees may elect to use a portion of operational funding, both in start-up and ongoing costs, for T/TA purposes.

Deadline

All applications must be submitted in HSES no later than Friday, June 24, 2016.

Please direct any questions regarding this Program Instruction to your Regional Office.

Thank you for the work you do on behalf of children and families.

/Blanca Enriquez/

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