

Head Start Management Systems Wheel





Head Start Management Systems: Guiding Questions


Introduction




The Head Start Management Systems Wheel is a visual representation of the 12 program management, planning, and oversight systems that are critical to sound program infrastructure and high-quality service delivery. Leadership and governance, the bedrocks of effective management, are depicted as surrounding all 12 systems. Head Start program leadership consists of three key entities: governing body or Tribal Council, Policy Council, and management staff. The governing body or Tribal Council assumes legal and fiscal responsibility for the program, the Policy Council sets direction, and the management staff oversee day-to-day operations. Together they are a powerful force that provides leadership and strategic direction. These management systems are crucial to the effective operation of the services in the inner blue circle which in turn result in quality child and family outcomes. Use the following questions to evaluate existing strengths and areas for growth in Head Start program operations.








Core Ingredient	Questions to Consider
<p>Leadership & Governance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you know that governing body or Tribal Council and Policy Council members are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities as Head Start program leaders? • How is the required expertise (for instance, expertise in financial and legal affairs and early education) represented on the governing body or Tribal Council? If exceptions have been made, how are they documented? • What is the makeup of the Policy Council? How are program options represented on the Policy Council? • How does communication between governing body or Tribal Council, Policy Council, and key management staff take place to support program decision-making? • If applicable, how are governing body or Tribal Council members involved in strategic planning activities? <hr/> <p>• <i>Do our leadership and communication practices enable us to make the strategic decisions that will move our programs forward?</i></p>

Management Systems	Questions to Consider
 <p>Program Planning & Service System Design</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the timeline for our annual program planning process? This process includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community assessment review and update ○ Goals and objectives development/review ○ Coordinated approaches ○ Action planning ○ Ongoing monitoring ○ Self-assessment • How are the following stakeholders engaged in our program planning process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program staff ○ Governing body or Tribal Council members ○ Policy Council members ○ Community members <hr/> <p>• <i>Do our planning efforts strengthen our outcomes for children, families and communities?</i></p>
 <p>Data & Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we collect and use data to inform ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement? • How do we utilize staff in our data management process? • What well-chosen and well-implemented methods for data collection and analysis do we use to determine impact? • How does our approach to data management support the availability, usability, integrity, and security of data? <hr/> <p>• <i>Does our data help us tell the story about how we are making a difference for our children, families, and community?</i></p>

Management Systems	Questions to Consider
 <p>Fiscal Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the timeline for our fiscal management activities? It should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Budget development and review ○ Monitoring actual expenditures against budget projections ○ Making major expenditures ○ Audit activities • How are our staff, governing body or Tribal Council and Policy Council members engaged in fiscal management activities? • How do our policies and procedures inform our fiscal management efforts? • How does our budgeting process relate to our program planning activities? • How does our budgeting process inform resource development efforts? • If applicable, how are we using advisory committees to support fiscal management activities? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do we have clean audits and have resources been maximized?</i>
 <p>Community & Self-Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does our community assessment focus on the needs of eligible children and families? Does our community assessment include school and child care data? How does the community assessment inform our program planning process? • What is the timeline of our self-assessment process? How is it informed by our program planning process? Who is engaged in the process? • How are the results of our self-assessment shared with staff and program leadership? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do our data collection and analysis activities inform the way our programs deliver services?</i>

Management Systems	Questions to Consider
 <p>Facilities & Learning Environments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does our system for managing and monitoring facilities and learning environments ensure that we meet health and safety requirements? • How do our indoor and outdoor learning environments support the needs of children, families, and staff? • How is facilities management addressed from the perspectives of program planning and fiscal management? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do our facilities and learning environments provide safe and challenging places that support our children and families?</i>
 <p>Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is our transportation system aligned with the needs of our families? • How do we monitor compliance of our transportation system with state and federal regulations? • What backup systems are in place to ensure all children are accounted for after each trip? • What are the budget implications of our maintenance and repair efforts? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does our transportation system move children safely and efficiently from one point to another?</i>
 <p>Technology & Information Systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does our technology (hardware and software) align with our program operations and planning activities? • How are technological issues addressed in fiscal management? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do we have the right technology in place to support our Head Start program?</i>

Management Systems	Questions to Consider
 <p>Training & Professional Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do our training and professional development plans address the knowledge and skills needed to meet our program’s goals and objectives? • How are we using our training and technical assistance funds to access additional professional development resources (beyond the T/TA available through our Regional Office and the national centers). <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do our training and professional development activities enable our staff and volunteers to move our Head Start programs from compliance to excellence?</i>
 <p>Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does our communication system address both internal and external communication among and between program leadership, staff, families, and the community? • How do our communications policies and procedures address key issues such as social media management and confidentiality? • What communication approaches are used to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically specific populations? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does our program communicate effectively with internal and external stakeholders?</i>
 <p>Recordkeeping & Reporting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does our recordkeeping and reporting system use technology to manage information? • How do our recordkeeping and reporting policies and procedures address key issues such as confidentiality? • How does our reporting system provide program leadership (governing body or Tribal Council and Policy Council) with key information to make decisions in a timely and thoughtful manner? • How does our recordkeeping and reporting system generate real-time reports that improve program services? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does our recordkeeping and reporting system help our program build and maintain its institutional memory?</i>

Management Systems	Questions to Consider
 <p>Ongoing Monitoring & Continuous Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does ongoing monitoring inform our program operations, planning process, and continuous quality improvement? • What is the timeline for ongoing monitoring activities? • How are staff trained and engaged in ongoing monitoring efforts? • How are the results of our ongoing monitoring shared with staff and program leadership? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does our ongoing monitoring system support our planning efforts?</i>
 <p>Human Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does our organizational structure support our staff to provide high-quality services to children and families? • What is our process for hiring and onboarding staff? • Does our process for hiring and onboarding include culturally responsive practices? • How do we ensure that staff members have the appropriate credentials and competencies to fulfill their job responsibilities? • How does our program promote retention? • How do our human resource activities inform our budgeting efforts? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Does our program effectively meet the professional development needs of our staff?</i>

This product was prepared under Grant # 90HC0011 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations.

