



Pandemic Programmatic and Community Update

Review key considerations for providing Head Start services during a pandemic. Programs can use these guiding questions to determine their immediate and temporary needs.

- **Immediate** needs are the most urgent issues a Head Start program needs to address, including but not limited to:
 - Assessing the situation
 - Obtaining and adhering to federal, state, and local guidance
 - Mobilizing program leadership
 - Communicating with program staff, families, and key stakeholders
 - Cleaning and disinfecting facilities

- **Temporary** needs are ongoing issues for a program to address as a pandemic unfolds (may be an extended period of time), including but not limited to:
 - Maintaining governance and fiscal activities
 - Exploring and implementing modified program options and services
 - Reviewing and addressing staffing needs to provide services to Head Start-eligible children and families

Head Start grantees can use the following matrix to describe and document the effects of a pandemic on program operations. It also helps grantees determine how community operations, services, and families have been impacted by a pandemic. The matrix promotes strategic planning using guiding questions. The questions help grantees articulate program and funding needs, inform and guide their response during a pandemic, and support them as they restore services.

Guiding Questions to Assess the Impact of a Pandemic	Immediate Actions <i>The most urgent issues a Head Start program needs to address</i>	Potential Actions <i>Workable solutions for a Head Start program to consider during a pandemic</i>	Information and Resources Needed
Grantee Response and Pandemic Assessment			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the pandemic impacted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing body/Tribal Council? • Policy Council? • Program leadership? • Family services? • Education? • Transportation? • Health? • Nutrition? • How have federal, tribal, state, and local government directives and guidance impacted program operations and service delivery? • Does the program have a plan for delivering services? 			



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is required to provide appropriate services during this time (e.g., support, resources, technology)? • Who are the essential staff? What are their roles and responsibilities during a pandemic? • How are services being documented and monitored? • What has worked so far? What could be working better? 			
Grantee Communication Plan			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the modified strategy for communicating with staff, governing body/Tribal Council and Policy Council members, parents, and community partners. • Describe the protocol for community and media communication. Who is the point of contact for the media? • What is the organization's experience with telework? • Has the organization been able to use technology to support service delivery? How is this evaluated? • How accessible are the grantee's data systems? How do those data systems protect personally identifiable information? • How will the grantee communicate its ongoing efforts to provide responsive services? 			



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National and Regional Office Communications			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What information and resources are being recommended by the Office of Head Start (OHS) at the regional and national levels? Have you checked the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) and reviewed relevant standards, Information Memoranda, and Program Instructions? • What are the central and Regional Offices' immediate concerns? • What is the protocol for communicating with the Regional Office? 			
Human Resource (HR) Considerations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are HR functions maintained during a pandemic, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment? • Hiring? • Onboarding? • Retention and resignation? • Leave time? • Health and mental health? • Other HR functions? • How is staff health and well-being supported during a pandemic? • What insurance-sponsored telecare, telehealth, and telemedicine services are offered to employees? 			



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Community Partnerships			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can existing or new community partnerships be leveraged to address needs caused by the pandemic? • How are community partners supporting the child care needs of essential workers? • What services are being provided, including emergency services? • Outline the community-wide strategic plan for recovery. How does the grantee monitor and assess its efforts in addressing the plan's goals and objectives? 			
Family Considerations and Resources			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are families coping with the pandemic? How are program staff communicating with families to ensure basic needs are being met? • How will the program continue to provide referrals for families? What services remain available during a pandemic? Describe the virtual platforms available for the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social • Mental health • Health • Dental • Nutrition • Disability • Financial aid • Employment • Child care and education 			



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Program Options			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are modified services monitored by the grantee to provide oversight and support for virtual work? • What supplies, resources, or materials are needed to deliver alternative service? • What type of remote learning is offered to children? How are families helped to meet their children's learning needs (e.g., virtually, materials physically provided, or a combination)? 			
Technology Needs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there adequate internet and cell phone services to provide and sustain distance learning? • How does the program communicate with families in areas with limited Wi-Fi access? • What training and technical assistance is needed to provide staff and families with virtual services? • What technological needs should be addressed in the future? 			
Health and Social Service Needs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does a pandemic impact the availability of medical and mental health services? What services are offered by community partners or through virtual platforms (e.g., telehealth, telecare, and telemedicine)? • How are families receiving up-to-date information on how to be safe during a pandemic? 			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have children with special needs been impacted? How can we minimize the disruption for children receiving these services? • How are prenatal services supported during a pandemic? 			
Nutrition Needs			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do families have access to low-cost, nutritious foods, including food distribution programs? • What role can Head Start programs play in expanding food delivery or nutrition services? 			
Pandemic Recovery Funding			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are pandemic funds made available from OHS? Has the grantee applied for those funds? How has the grantee leveraged flexibilities during a pandemic? • Are additional funds available from federal, tribal, state, or local government and other agencies? If yes, when will application be made? What terms, conditions, and requirements must be satisfied to apply? 			