

## Exploring Needs and Strategies in Uncertain Times Webinar

John Williams: Good afternoon, everyone. This is John Williams from the National Center for ... on Program Management and Fiscal Operations, commonly known as PMFO, and I am pleased to welcome a nationwide audience to our discussion with our—with OHS on ERSEA: Exploring Needs and Strategies During Uncertain Times.

We know we have a lot of people registered for this webinar. A lot of people have been looking forward to it since we especially entered the COVID-19 episode. And so we're very happy to work alongside OHS and providing you with some updated information. We're going to use this salon time for the next 14 minutes or so before we started at 2 o'clock Eastern Time to just familiarize everyone with the layout of—of the GoToWebcast platform so that everybody can really have an optimal listening and participation experience for this over the next hour and a half. So to help us all with that, I am pleased to turn over my speaking duties to Sarah Robinson who is one of our technical managers for all our webinars. So Sarah, please.

Sarah Robinson: Hi, thank you, John. I'm just going to go over a few things. First of all, welcome to today's webinar. Today's presentation will be broadcasted in the listen-only mode, through your computer speakers and it will be available as an on-demand recording. So if for any reason are disconnected or cannot get back in, rest assured you will still be able to receive today's presentation in its entirety shortly after. And if you are having any trouble hearing through your computer speakers, please use the Q&A and I will be able to assist you behind the scenes to troubleshoot, as well as if you're having any issues with the visual. And we also have the slides available for—for download, so those will be available in the tab for you to download. And that is all I have for today. Back to you, John.

John: Thanks so much, Sarah. And again, we on behalf of the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations really wanted to welcome every one of you across the country, to our discussion with OHS on

ERSEA: Exploring Needs and Strategies During Uncertain Times. Obviously, all of us that are listening and participating today, have had to make a lot of adjustments to our respective operations, and that applies to those of us in the National Center world, as well as T/TA, and obviously OHS.

So we know this is a very pertinent topic at this time, and we know a lot of people have been looking forward to it. as evidenced by our capacity registration for this webinar, so we're very excited to share this information with you and have you bring some good information back to your—your respective audiences. We are going to be also offering another webinar on July 1 and that will be another OHS-PMFO discussion. And that will focus on Strengthening and Sustaining Partnerships, an interactive conversation that will happen on Wednesday, July 1, 2020, from 2 to 3:30 p.m., the exact same time that we're going on today. So I'll give you another reminder about that, but you'll be seeing information about that and we encourage you to register for that as well.

With that, I'm going to again turn to my colleague, Sarah Robinson, who is my PMFO colleague, and very knowledgeable—along with Hannah Katzen—on all things technical and she's going to give you a little bit of a tour of the GoToWebcast platform so that you can have an optimal listening and participation experience.

Sarah: Hi again, and welcome to today's webinar. Today's presentation will be broadcasted in the listen-only mode through your computer speaker. About that, if you are having any trouble either viewing or hearing any presentation, be sure to use the Q&A and I will be able to assist you behind the scenes. And if you have any technical difficulties and are not able to get back on for any reason today's webcast will be recorded and will be on-demand available for you shortly after, and you'll be able to access it using the same link. And I just want to direct our attention to, there's a few handouts available. So if you go to the bottom left-hand side, in that pod, you'll be able to see those links. And that is all I have. Back to you John.

John: Yes, good afternoon everyone. This is John Williams, I'm with PMFO, otherwise known as the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations. I'm very happy to welcome you to our discussion

on ERSEA: Exploring Needs and Strategies During Uncertain Times. We are working alongside our partners at the Office of Head Start to co-host this with you and I think you're going to find it a very informative conversation that is designed to address a number of key issues around ERSEA in the current episode that we're in right now with COVID-19. We know that a lot of people have been looking forward to this particular discussion as evidenced by our registration. So we want to welcome all of you that are coming on.

And as Sarah mentioned, really remind you that in case you're not able, and let others know that cannot attend at the 2 o'clock hour, that this information will be available to them in terms of the transcript and in terms of the slides out in the on-demand platform as well. We are very excited to provide this with you. We've been working alongside OHS, as we are putting this together, had a number of conversations all the way through in getting to this point so we're very excited to share this information with you.

Do you want to give a quick shout out and some future marketing for yet another OHS PMFO discussion that will be coming along the line in about two and a half weeks on Wednesday, July 1, 2020, also from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time, we'll be talking about Strengthening and Sustaining Partnerships, and that will also be an interactive conversation. And so we're looking at the current landscape of Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships, as well as the partnership world in general, and we'll be discussing a number of new resources and helping people discover ways to build on your experience, expertise, using different scenarios and other interactive means.

So we do hope you can make it for that webinar as well. Again, that's Strengthening and Sustaining Partnerships, an interactive conversation that will be occurring on Wednesday, July 1, 2020, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time, in the afternoon.

So Sarah Robinson, my colleague at CMFO, please remind people of how they can have an optimal listening and participation experience using GoToWebcast.

Sarah: Hi, everyone. I'm Sarah Robinson. And I'm just going to go over some information here for you today. We do have the events resources available once you click on the "Events and Resource" tab. On the drop-down there are some handouts there. And just to let you know, today's webinar will be presented in the listen-only mode. So it will be broadcasted through your computer speakers. Please do let us know on the Q&A if you have any audio issues and I will be able to assist you behind the scenes. In that slide if you have any other issues, if you can't see the presentation for any reason, go ahead and use that Q&A box as well. And like John mentioned, the presentation will also be recorded and it will be available on demand. And that will be available using the same link that you use to get into today's webinar. And it will be available shortly after the presentation. So if there is any time where you are disconnected or for whatever reason cannot get back on we will try to assist you to make sure that you are able to be a part of this, but any reason that it does not happen we will be sure that you'll get that recording.

Well, that is all I have. Back to you, John.

John: OK, and we're noticing a lot of activity already in the Q&A box. So please tell there'll be a number of us while the webinar is going on. Getting your questions set up for being answered. We will have a Q&A at the end of David Jones' and Karen Surprenant's discussion on ERSEA. So please know that, but thank you already for your early interest in getting some of your needs met. We have about 566 people in the salon. We have a capacity of 5,000 and I believe we have about that many registered. So we're very, very excited to provide this with you. My name is John Williams, and I want to welcome all of you from around the country on behalf of the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations, more commonly known as PMFO, to our discussion alongside the Office of Head Start on ERSEA: Exploring Needs and Strategies During Uncertain Times.

And for those of you that have been participants on the two national webinars going over some of the fiscal flexibilities. I believe that was hosted by Dr. B and Colleen Rathgeb and Belinda Rinker, and Heather Wisneski, you heard some references, even in the fiscal context about ERSEA and so we're going to do a little deeper dive about some of the issues going on there as they pertain to the COVID-19 environment that we're currently in. We've been very excited and we knew there would be a lot of interest in this so we're very excited to be working alongside the Office of Head Start in putting this discussion together for you today.

Before we talk further about some of the technical issues, I do want to give a quick shout out to another Office of Head Start and PMFO discussion that will be occurring in about two and a half weeks on Wednesday, July 1, actually three weeks, Wednesday, July 1, 2020, from two to 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time. We'll be having a discussion on Strengthening and Sustaining Partnerships. Like this webinar, it will also be interactive. And so if you have any questions about partnerships including Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships. We encourage your participation there as well. And you'll be seeing information on ECLKC, on how to register for that session as well. We're about three minutes out from the top of the hour when I'll turn it over to David Jones and Karen Surprenant.

In the meantime, I do want to give Sarah Robinson, my PMFO colleague, a chance to walk you through the GoToWebcast features so that you can have an optimal participation and listening experience. Hannah, I mean Sarah, please.

[Laughing]

Sarah: Thanks, John. Hi, my name is Sarah Robinson and I am welcoming you all to today's webinar. Today's presentation will be broadcasted in the listen-only mode through your computer speakers. And if you are experiencing any audio-visual issues, please be sure to use the Q&A and I will be able to assist you behind the scenes.

We also have under the event resources, we have some handouts that are available for download. So you'll be able to find them there. They're right in the left-hand side, under where you see the presenters. And as John mentioned earlier, today's webinar will be available on demand; it will be recorded, and the same link that you use to access today's webinar will be the link that you will use to access the recording. And that is all I have; back to you John.

John: OK, so we did have someone comment in the question and answer box that we seem to be making the same announcement over and over. The good news is this is probably the last time, because we're very near the 2 o'clock hour.

This is John Williams from the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations, and I want to welcome all of you to our conversation, alongside the Office of Head Start, on ERSEA: Exploring Needs and Strategies During Uncertain Times. We know this has been a very popular topic for folks, especially in the COVID-19 phase, and as everyone is making adjustments to their operations, ERSEA is no exception. So we'll be exploring the various facets of ERSEA and talking about that in real time.

So not belabor anything, I want to turn over the gavel to Sarah Robinson who'll be taking us one more time through some of the technical aspects of the GoToWebcast platform, and then we'll get started. Sarah?

Sarah: Great. Hi again, everyone. Today's webinar will be presented to you in the listen-only mode through your computer speakers. So if you have any issues with your audio or even visual, please be sure to let us know in that Q&A box, and we'll be able to assist you behind the scenes. Also, as John mentioned a few times today's webinar will be recorded and it will be ready, available shortly after the end of today's presentation on a on-demand feature. So you'll be able to use the same link that you used to access today's webinar to access the recording.

And I also want to draw your attention to the event resources that are available to you, right under where you see the today's presenters. Just go ahead and click on that pod and it will drop down and you'll be able to access those resources.

And that is all I have. Again, thanks everybody for joining and back to you, John.

John: Thanks so much, Sarah.

It's now 2:01. So we're now going to get started. My name is John Williams, from the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations. I want to welcome everyone to our discussion, with the Office of Head Start, on

ERSEA: Exploring Needs and Strategies During Uncertain Times. We have a number of registrants for this webinars. This has been a very popular and anticipated topic, and so I do want to say thank you in advance to everyone that's been responsible for producing it. And at this point I would like to introduce Karen Surprenant from PMFO, and David Jones, our federal project officer for PMFO from the Office of Head Start. Karen and David, please take it away.

Karen Surprenant: OK, thanks very much, John. And thank you, John and Sarah, for that important and that technical information. It's important so that we can \all really maximize the time that we spend together by being able to navigate the screen and the platform that we're using. So thanks for that. And as John said, we're here to talk about ERSEA: Exploring Needs and Strategies During Uncertain Times. This is our OHS-PMFO update. We work in partnership on this. And I'm Karen Surprenant from PMFO. It's really an honor to be talking with you today with some leadership from the Office of Head Start. And I'm just going to ask David to do the introduction. David, do you want to say hello?

David Jones: Absolutely Karen, thank you. Hi everyone. Again, my name is David Jones. I'm a management analyst, and as John said, the federal project officer for the National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations. I'm also delighted to introduce Colleen Rathgeb, director of Policy Oversight and Planning. Colleen is going to be participating in listen-only mode until we are ready to respond to some of the wonderful questions that we know you'll have for us.

Our goal for this national webinar is to share information, providing support and guidance for you during this pandemic. The content we will discuss is drawing upon existing resources, ERSEA tip sheets, with a slight tilt towards the circumstances under which many of you are currently operating.

We recognize you might be engaging governing bodies, the Policy Council, and community partners to inform some of the decisions that you're attempting to make in an effort to keep families connected and provide requisite quality early childhood services. It is also imperative that we hear from you to ensure the Office of Head Start and our national centers are providing resources that can help you make data-informed decisions.

In the time that we have to spend with you today, we want you to know that although the goal is for grantees to maintain their funding enrollment, we expect that you will embrace the flexibilities and be realistic about the situations you're facing, providing services virtually. You'll hear this again; however, please know that documentation supporting the decisions you are making is going to be essential because it would help the Office of Head Start, better understand what is happening with all grantees. The loss of a central partnerships that might have provided much needed supports for families, changes in their schedule, and availability can change how you communicate, and of course how you collaborate. It might also inform decision making as you evaluate how to resume services in shared physical spaces when the time comes.

So Karen is going to take you through the majority of the presentation and I will scaffold and support the conversation as appropriate. Karen?

Karen: Thanks, David. This is a 90-minute presentation and we've built in some opportunity to hear from you in the form of polls. And as John mentioned, we will have a Q&A at the end. We will probably not be able to address all your questions, but we will certainly look for themes and talk to you about how you can get those unanswered questions answered. So let's just start with a little bit of fun here. Let's take a look at where you all are broadcasting or are watching from. Where is our Head Start family throughout the country?

So you have a poll there, and you can tell us what region you're from.

And you have the 12 Regions listed there. I'm wondering if we can actually see the results as they come in? I think people can quickly do that poll count. There you go. Let's see. I see a lot of people from Region V, followed by VI, and it's great to see that we have a representation of the entire Head Start community in all of our regions. Still coming in. And again as John said, if you know colleagues that were unable to get on, the recording will be available so that we can really get this information out to the community, to the Head Start community.

David: Hey Karen, it looks like we got a lot of people from Region IV. That seems to be the largest regional participation at this moment.

Karen: Absolutely. And we have 1,390 participants on right now. So you can see, we have a large numbers and we have them well represented throughout the country. So I think I'm going to move us along so we can get to business. Thank you for doing that. And there will be, as I said, opportunities to do some other polls based on the content.

So as we begin our presentation, I want you to think about this core question that we developed to frame up our conversation here today. And it says, "What is the strategy to address current and future community, family, and child needs in the present environment?" So what do you say to this question? Is this reflective of the work that we do? We think about our work. We're always attempting to understand our community to design and implement services that meet those needs that we've identified. And then we're constantly evaluating and assessing them to see what we can do to make them better. So let's think about this core question with an ERSEA perspective.

How do we ensure that our ERSEA services are flexible and that they are responding to the changing economic and social pattern? And how does the question change in light of what's happening in our programs, in the lives of our families and in our community, and how does it impact that strategy going forward? So in the context of those two questions, let's take a look at what we hope to accomplish today. We want to explore strategies to address current and future communities, family, and child needs. We'll talk about adapting ERSEA services in uncertain time. And we want to offer up some resources to you that will support your ERSEA efforts. One resource that I want to start out with is called ERSEA Strategies During the Pandemic. So this is fairly new.

You can find it on ECLKC but we have also included it on the list of resources that—that Hannah has told you is in the bottom left-hand corner, the tab there. So hopefully you'll have an opportunity to take a look at that. I'm going to move us along. We have this word in Head Start that we throw around, ERSEA—unique to us. And we know that it stands for Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, Attendance.

And while we talked about it as one word, it's really important that we plan for and assess each one of these ERSEA services. We used to say that ERSEA was a system, and now we refer to it as a service, which you can see in our Head Start Management Systems Wheel. Just like all of the other services that we have that contribute to those quality child and family outcomes. And the management systems all impact that ERSEA service.

So what does that mean? What does that mean when we say ERSEA is a service? Do you think about its quality and responsiveness just like you think about the other Head Start services, your education services, your mental health, your family and community engagement. It reminds me when I think about, when I first thought about ERSEA as a service, I thought about when I was a director and we would do enrollments in the summer, and we had a building that all of the classrooms were dismantled so the floor could be done, and everything was pushed aside and covered with tops. And that's how families came into involve their children.

And then it dawned on me that, well, this is not really responsive to the family and the child. And we recognized the importance to set up a classroom, take the parent in there, take the child there and kind of do a little bit of a more responsive enrollment process. So just a small example, but encouraging you to think about ERSEA as a service. So again, but thinking about our management systems, I'm going to move us on. This slide depicts, all these books that you have, and it's the ERSEA ... It's the management system's wheel with an ERSEA guiding questions approach.

So I want to look a little deeper at just a few of the management systems, as they pertain to ERSEA. The first one being leadership and strategic direction. So how are you involving the governing body and the Policy Council in the decisions that are going on now with our program adaptations that are going to move us forward in this challenging times. So it's important that leadership provides the strategic direction necessary for responsive ERSEA services. What about the management system around data, data-informed? Are we using that data to ensure the identification and enrollment of those neediest children? And think about the data that you've been collecting in these past few months during remote service delivery, that's important data that you can use going forward.

What have you learned about your community, your families in the last few months? How will you use that information going forward? In allocation of resources, just like the other services that we provide, we need to plan for ERSEA services from a fiscal perspective. Technology. There's lots of technology involved in the delivery of ERSEA services. We need to assess eligibility. We need to track recruitment, enrollment statistics. We need to monitor attendance. So do we have that technology in place that will enable us to do that? And what kind of changes have happened in these last few months that might change your ability and what your needs are in regards to doing this?

And lastly, I just want to mention training and professional development. Staff need to be trained in not only the technical aspects of ERSEA, but also the human element so that they can effectively work with families.

So I'm going to move us on. Dave is going to talk to us about the community assessment.

David: Yes, thanks Karen. So with respect to decision areas—I mean decision areas is informed by community assessment data. What I want to do with this slide really is just talking a little bit about all of the other sort of competing and potentially conflicting priorities some of you might be engaged in.

Because right now this could be a time with some of your thinking about your annual update of the community assessment. And so when you look at recruitment and selection and strategic plans and goals and all of that, the things that are on the slide, you might be in a position where you're amending your recruitment selection and enrollment practices. It also makes sense that some of the strategic plans and goals that you've come up with, they might change. Leveraging partnerships and coordinating services during this time takes on greater significance as again, program calendars and service delivery options have changed.

And some of you may have even had to expand your catchment area to recruit and continue to serve families that could potentially have needed to move to reside with other family members during this time or whatever the case may be. Now, I'm sure most of you are aware none of the normal circumstances, if a program decides to change their service area after ACF has approved the grant application, that they must submit a new service area proposal for approval; however, again, we recognize that programs are doing everything possible to serve families and to sustain your engagement.

And the Office of Head Start would be completely understanding, And the only thing that we would ask is if you find that you're in that situation, is that you would really, sort of, alert the Regional Office. Just to move on to the next slide.

Karen: OK, I'm going to talk a little bit about eligibility next. Now eligibility services provide a mechanism for ensuring consistent and appropriate enrollment practices, which is so important these days. Here's where we see the importance of our record keeping systems for monitoring ERSEA practices, and for providing that data to identify and assess those necessary modifications.

We also want to make sure that our staff are knowledgeable about Head Start eligibility, and that they understand the avenue to eligibility. And it's helpful if they understand child care subsidies that can initiate and support partnerships. Other changes in the local or state subsidies these days that can impact eligibility. And again the importance of using that community assessment data to find out where those eligible children are and communicating that to your leadership.

It's also important to think about your criteria for accepting over income children. And to be certain that it's consistent with the needs across your community. David's going to talk a little bit about eligibility oversight next.

David: Yes. Thanks Karen. So again, eligibility oversight, it is critical for ensuring that programs are using Head Start funds properly, and that they're recruiting the neediest family to fulfill taking slots. So things like policies and procedures that promote consistent adherence to regulatory requirements ensures that ERSEA services are being directed to those needy families.



And it might require that you make some amendments during this time of those policies and procedures. Programs should have systems in place to ensure that eligibility has been established in accordance with the regulations and that the appropriate documents and/or declarations have been collected, verified, and maintained. And one question that I have is, "How might this have changed for many of you?"

Programs are probably taking advantage of telephone interviews and viewing documentation via Skype and other technology platforms because the in-person interviews are not possible. It's also important that procedures should be in place to ensure the appropriate use of over income allowances. Is there a process—do you have a process in place to ensure that income eligible families are prioritized for services? And does the selection criteria include conditions for accepting families that are over the income?

And as Karen alluded to earlier, you know, it's important to make sure that you're constantly training staff with respect to any changes that you're making in your ERSEA policies and procedures to ensure that they not only understand the eligibility requirements, but they're able to apply them—apply them broadly.

Karen: And David, I just want to mention, too, while we're in this time of flux and uncertainty, our Head Start Program Performance Standards are still valid, and the income guidelines are still valid. While there's things we can't do the same way because we're physically not with families and children, we still want to adhere to those requirements around eligibility verification and around income. So the standards have not gone away and we want to do our best to be in compliance with them.

David: Absolutely Karen, it's a great point. So next we're going to talk a little bit more about over the income allowances. So in addition to the typically the 10% over the income allowances, the Performance Standards really gives programs an opportunity to enroll an additional 35% of children, whose families are below 130% of the poverty line with certain conditions. And it really is essentially that programs are servicing families that fall below this number first, if they exist.

You know, some of you may have just been at your outreach efforts and are amending enrollment policies and procedures to ensure that again, you're being responsive to the kind of situation and that is apropos and again, like I said, we're completely understanding of that. But to Karen's point, you know, the standards don't go away, the things that you should be adhering to and complying with are critically important with respect to the over income allowances and serving the children in the families that you should be serving. Karen?

Karen: OK, I'm going to talk a little bit about training. It is in the Head Start Program Performance Standards, 1302.12(m), and I'm not going to read you the whole standard, but I really want to point out that it's an important part of responsive and compliant ERSEA services. And those standards talk about the need to provide training—eligibility training for the governing body of a Tribal Council, the Policy Council management and staff who determine eligibility.

So you're training them on the applicable federal regulation on your program's policies and procedures, and you really want to make sure that they know how to collect and complete,

accurate eligibility verification, so that they well trained and well versed in what they're doing. But the language also talks about, and I mentioned this earlier, about training staff to engage, to strengthen their skills to be able to engage with families who are—who are experiencing sensitive kinds of issues and to deal with them in a respectful and private kind of way. So it's really important to think about your training systems and make sure you have that in place. We did at the beginning of the session, talk about management systems approach to developing ERSEA, and training and professional development is one of those 12 Head Start Management Systems. Does your training and professional development system adequately support ERSEA services?

So really just think about that and think about that in the light of changes. There may be so many things that you want to train on in terms of these pandemic times that they certainly, I don't have to say that, but think about holistically about your training professional development system. Just going to move ahead to talk about recruitment practices.

So even during these times of extended closures, we need to think about responsive recruitment practices. Are we serving and finding the most vulnerable families. And not only children experiencing homelessness, children with special needs, children in foster care, What are vulnerable families look like these days in the times of this pandemic? Other outreach strategies. I address those diverse needs and those new needs identified. Again are we training staff to work with these vulnerable populations. And what's certain is that we're understanding the services and the related features that are most valued by our families. And do we market in a way that appeals to our targeted families? David?

David: Yeah, you know, Karen, what was interesting, I think when we were of thinking about recruitment practices in the current situation, it reminded me of, you know, the fact that the home-based program option is typically, you know, just an interesting conversation in general as we partner with families in an effort to provide services in their home.

And now that services are being delivered pretty much, you know, virtually, there has to be some conversation regarding, you know, what this looks like without the face-to-face contact. Without the typical observations that are made when you're supporting someone in your home and virtually again, using technology you're able to make some of those observations, but it's different, right?

And so one of the things that grantees might be really wrestling with is what are the expectations that we have from families during—during this, you know, method of service delivery. And how does a grantee manage? And one of the really important aspects of service delivery, which is relationship building and—and sustaining that relationship and developing it over time. Given the fact that, you know, staff maybe struggling with difficulty delivering services virtually, and families may also be, you know, dealing with competing priorities of participating in services, but also managing other children and managing family situations in the home.

And the reason I mentioned this, because earlier, in the conversation, you know, when you talked about ERSEA going from being a system to a service, some folks across the field initially struggled with ERSEA being viewed as a service. But if you think about it, all of the services that

grantees provide, health, family engagement, early childhood, the foundation for all of these services is the relationships that we build with families. And if you think about ERSEA holistically, I think about that intake, the time when you're first meeting a family and you're introducing them to whatever program option is that they're interested in, it begins to be that connection that you make initially with that family, that portal.

So ERSEA is the gateway to ongoing relationships that we build with families. And I think it's really important during this time to think about how grantees are working to sustain those relationships and how some of that may have changed in a virtual space.

Karen: Absolutely, absolutely. And with programs being closed for so long that it really may have impacted programs' normal recruitment activities. And there ... We've heard about how programs are developing new ways to conduct their recruitment activities with online applications and as you said, increased use of technology.

Maybe working with partners in a different way. You know, are you working together on recruitment efforts, maybe through each other's websites or through coalition meetings that are virtual, but just finding different ways to do that. And it's always important that programs monitor their—their community data so that they can—they can track what works and see where they need to put their efforts in. But we can take this time right now to get some feedback from our audience regarding ERSEA strategy by using our second poll. It's actually our third poll if you count the logistics one. So Hannah's going to pull up a poll for us. Oops, oops.

[Inaudible]

And the poll question is: What are some strategies that you are using or considering to reach families? Are you sharing? Nope. Are you sharing recruitment info via social media platforms and websites? Are you recruiting through partnering organizations and LEAs? Are you advertising in newspapers and on radio? Are you asking currently enrolled families to invite friends or family to apply? Are you mailing recruitment? Are you doing something else? And for “other,” we would love to hear your comments, or to read your comments in the Q&A. You can put them right there in the Q&A section, your “other.” You know, I know mailing sounds kind of old fashioned, but I put some great ideas about mailing. Programs have used the postal website to identify their target areas. And on the postcards they've included a barcode that will take them directly to an online application.

So a way to make high tech and old fashioned kind of recruitment mechanisms. That's something that's interesting [Inaudible] So we see that lots of people are sharing equipment and computers, social media platforms, websites, and mobile devices. Yeah. Asking currently enrolled families. That's a great strategy to use those relationships you have with your current family that are your biggest advocates that are your greatest fans that are able to promote the program and connect with other people who would love to join. Electronic. We see the use of electronic applications and QR codes coming in 48.9% is programs using those. And again these are ideas for you that you might not have been using. I'm not seeing anything come in on the Q&A in terms of answers.

So if you'd like to share your “other” ... Do you see any, David?

David: No, I don't actually, I'm having a little bit of a technical problem seeing the survey responses such as a [Inaudible]

Karen: We'd love to hear your "other," because if we were all together in a room, you'd be able to share those great strategies with your colleagues.

John: Karen and David, we do have a number of different, for "other," Karen, we have, completing recruitments over the phone, conducting Zoom outreach with the local health care facility, Recruitment info at food giveaway sites. Books in free little libraries with recruitment flyers inside. A number of things. Pulling information from MHS, not sure what MHS stands for. I don't know if that's a local designation. And somebody said, "We didn't mention this in the poll, we were doing yard signs for our parent ambassadors to use in their homes." So that's a sample of some of the things people said.

Karen: I also heard about yard signs with the barcode on them, too. And I think I am seeing them now [Inaudible] that recruitment info in painted rocks placed in the community. I see large banners, advertising Lamaze classes for the community so we get prenatal applications, fantastic. Canvassing neighborhoods. Adding flyers to school [Inaudible]. We have some agencies resisting social media online recruitment. Well, we have a wonderful training module at ECLKC, about social media. And I wish I could think of the name of it; maybe John could help me out here. It's all good, I'll get it for you.

Oh, what did I say people use the postal website. They use it to identify specific target areas. Filming virtual open house, which would be shared via social media. Check out that posted site. Parade somewhere. Well, we used to have parades and summer activities, didn't we? Maybe we will have some. A remind app. So we can see lots and lots of wonderful ideas. And I think I'm going to, in the interest of time, I'm going to move us on. OK.

David: Karen real quick. The item you're looking for is Social Media Essentials for Getting Head Start Programs Connected.

Karen: Thank you, that's on ECLKC. You never know, sometimes a little bit of encouragement might help move you along in that area. Certainly can't hurt to try. I'm going to bring us back to a slide and move us along to selection. The thing a little bit about selection. We know that so much in policies and procedures ensure that children who would benefit most from Head Start services are identified, enrolled. And during a pandemic, the program selection criteria may need to be modified to ensure that those children and families most in need are given priority.

Again, the importance of the community's assessment. We know that the community assessment guides our development of selection criteria, and we know the standards tell us that we need to consider family income, homelessness, children of foster care, age, eligibility for special ed. But it also says and other relevant child and family risk factors. So we know this risk factors may include families impacted by COVID-19 based on what that community assessment data is telling you.

Other factors that you need to consider based on all of that internal data that you've been collecting in the past few months, telling you what it is that's going on with your family. I want to mention another resource that we have, the post-pandemic and [Inaudible] that will help

you take a look at your community and identify action steps for you in moving forward. OK. Moving to us along, we haven't [Inaudible] on management systems approach. In this two-part [Inaudible] provides the context, for continuous improvement in Head Start. And we're all familiar with it because through goal setting and the identifications of strengths and challenges, we're able to establish a path flow.

What is it we want to do to make things better? Where do we want to go? So this management systems approach enables programs to evaluate important ERSEA considerations in support of needed planning during uncertain times. So some of those goals that you're writing, maybe tweak, and maybe dealing with some ERSEA considerations that have—that have shown themselves.

But we want to make sure that those adaptations are thoughtful, that they're based on solid planning, they're responsive to data. So also we want to make sure that we're communicating with our Regional Office when we're planning about what our program modifications are going to look like. David, I don't know if you had anything you wanted to add to this.

David: Nope, I think you covered everything, Karen.

Karen: OK, OK. So again, thinking about data-informed decisions, programs are continually using their data to plan for and delivering a service that meets the needs they've identified. And we have certainly seen this in the past few months and it becomes even more critical as we're adjusting up services to adapt to the uncertainties of these times, to move our programs forward into the next phase of meeting our family needs. Again, the Management Systems Wheel with those pandemic questions used as a management systems approach to help programs assess their current situation and move forward with planning and service delivery. So—so check that out.

Another resource there in your list of resources, but we also want to take another ... Jackie is telling me that there's two. I believe we have two resources, the Management Systems Wheel with Pandemic Questions and the Pandemic Programmatic Community Update. So let me clarify that, and we should have both of those resources in our resource list and I will double check to make sure that that's happened.

David: Yeah, Karen, that's correct, and again, I think just for clarity, people wanted to make sure that we repeat it, that we have the Social Media Essentials for Getting Head Start Programs Connected. And then there was also the A to Z resource on leveraging technology. Again, given the current circumstances under which our grantees are operating, these were resources that we thought would be really meaningful during this time.

Karen: Thank you, David. So let's now take a look at what's happening in your program with our next poll. And it is Poll No. 2 which asks: What kinds of adaptations have you made or are considering to be responsive to the needs of families from an ERSEA perspective? Are you modifying methods of service delivery? Are you changing program options? Are you changing your schedule or calendar? Have you enhanced partnerships with service delivery? Expanded health-related services or "other." And again feel free to tell us about the "other." We would love it if you told us about the "other." Wow. Some big numbers here. Modified methods, of

course, we're modifying methods of service delivery. And another big response that I see, I think they're still coming in, 47% changes in schedule calendar. We know people that ...

David: That one, Karen, we knew would be significant for a lot of grantees in terms of having to shift the way in which they're delivering services.

Karen: Programs that have to pay attention to state requirements on ratios and different aspects of service delivery. So it's definitely going to impact what programs are doing. And yet I didn't mean to cut you off. Enhanced partnerships. We may have new kinds of resources available in terms of healthcare, health education that we were going to be connecting with. Yeah. Oh, standard health related services. "Other." We have seen "other." Let me see ... And again ...

David: We'd be interested to know a little bit more about what the "other" services are. It's not a large percentage, but it would be good to know.

Karen: Parents want to know what the school day, week, will most likely we'll not be able to go back to maybe a [Inaudible], that's the answer due to department of health restrictions, and we may need to have an alternate day schedule. Again, I've heard the word nimble used so much—be [Inaudible], be nimble, be [Inaudible]. Getting the information you need, sharing it with your governing bodies in order to make those decisions in an informed and inclusive way. Issue with local doctors. I don't know someone who left "other."

[Inaudible]

David: And I would imagine, too, Karen, that with respect to the expanded health-related services, a lot of it is just sort of responding to just the fears and concerns that parents have for themselves and their children.

And you know, again, getting them connected to resources in the community, which is tough now, right? Because you can't go into a lot of the physical spaces where they would normally receive those type of types of healthcare supports and services. I know it's got to be pretty challenging for families to just be calm and ... [Inaudible] ... benefit from the information that we know the health centers are putting out as well. Karen.

Yep, yep. OK. I'm going to leave a little bit more material to cover before we begin talking to you. One thing that I would like to do is just take a moment to touch on homelessness because we know this hasn't gone away, if anything it could be an even more dire situation with our economic downturn. But in January of 2019, Dr. Bergeron launched the Home at Head Start campaign, and she wanted to draw our attention to the 2 million children in our country that are homeless. One million of them under the age of 6. And at that time she issued a challenge to increase the enrollment of children from families experiencing homelessness.

And to support this effort programs are encouraged to use the Supporting Children and Families Experiencing Homelessness. You see the name up there on the slide. Those are learning modules on ECLKC. They're really a valuable resource for supporting the enrollment and participation of this vulnerable population. So go ahead and check those out if you haven't done that yet. And we've also included in our handouts, IM-HS-19-03 and this information

provides—this IM provides information about ways that children in kinship care can be eligible for Head Start.

So many of you may be familiar with that and may be using it already, but I just wanted to put it out there just in case, 'cause it's really important population here. And touching upon this just quickly, you might want to take a screenshot of this slide. So you have the regulation numbers, but this is a look at regulation-based strategies that programs can use to enhance access and participation for those children and families experiencing homelessness. And without getting into all of them in detail, they address prioritization, eligibility, the verification flexibilities that we have to support family enrollment. There's one about grace periods to support families in obtaining necessary verification, that they may have trouble getting because of their homeless status.

And again, the importance of staff training, not only understanding the regulations, but having the skills to deal with sensitive topics. And lastly, we want to support continuity of service for these families and an effective transitions when that time comes that they are leaving our program. David's going to talk to us next about some recent OHS instructions that is on the COVID page.

David: Thanks, Karen. What I want to say here is that I'm pretty confident that most of you are aware that the Office of Head Start recently issued guidance on enrollment inquiries related to COVID-19, around program closures, as well as specific guidance and flexibilities related to grantees that are participating for the [Inaudible]. This guidance can be found on ECLKC in the COVID-19 resource section, COVID-19 and the Head Start Community. But just to walk through some of it quickly.

The guidance instructs grantees to continue to report monthly enrollment. Now again, it is important for you to understand that the Office of Head Start is keenly aware of what's happening with grantees as you attempt to provide services and be responsive to ERSEA. It is recommended to the degree possible, that programs provide services to enroll children and families using technology, or other creative means, and they should consider slots enrolled unless a family has told them that they cannot or will not return. Grantees should also continue to report them with the enrollment, even if services and engagement activities are significantly limited in some areas. It's important again, to continue to try to be creative and innovative and actively recruit.

I know I noticed in the chat that there are some questions with respect to reopening, and again we're going to focus primarily in the ERSEA conversation today, but identifying eligible families now will support, you know, operations and plans from you get to a place where you are thinking about reopening. And we know that programs are using technology and other creative methods to reach families, so we're encouraging you just to continue to do that while you're prioritizing staff and also thinking about their health and safety. It's important to continue ... Go ahead, Karen.

Karen: No, no, go ahead [Inaudible]

David: OK. It's important to continue ...

Karen: [Inaudible] when you're done ... I'm sorry, go ahead David.

David: Sure. Programs should continue to enroll children and provide services demonstrating, again, the flexibility and creativity when verifying eligibility. And of course, be sure to, again, just to document services. I mean, gave an example early and I saw some questions pop up in the chat about verifying eligibility. You know, again, for the most part I think a lot of the families that grantees are currently serving depending upon when you're programming year starts, have already sort of gone through the eligibility verification process, right? So, but for those families that you're enrolling new, again, doing your best to leverage technology, sharing documentation through secure methods is what we would sort of recommend.

But again, that flexibility and hoping and knowing that you'll have opportunities to follow through on some of that verification may be a way to go. Enrollment reporting flexibilities. Again, during this time, reporting enrollment figures would not be considered in determining the grantee's enrollment status. The Office of Head Start is going to continue to monitor monthly enrollment, but, of course, they're part of it. There's a pause button, right, with respect to how they're evaluating under or fully enrolled grantees until operations resume. Programs that were on enrollment plans just should refer to the guidance on the ECLKC, which addresses the various stages of the full enrollment initiative. Karen, I think you wanted to add something.

Karen: Yes, I think that I was getting a question about the IM I mentioned. That it was IM-HS-19-03, about kinship care and eligibility for Head Start. So you could search for that on ECLKC. OK. Shall I move us on? And actually, as we come to the end of our ERSEA letters and we get to attendance ... Typically, when we talk about attendance, when we talk about ERSEA, we like to stress the importance of supporting consistent attendance, and oftentimes the children with poor attendance, who are at risk for being dropped for those attendance issues, those are the ones that are most in need of our services. But these days food programs are closed, the messaging is a bit different.

First of all, again, I want to remind you document all the ways, and we've said that before, all the ways that you're providing services to children and families, whether it's food distribution, virtual learning activities, those take home curriculum bags that you're doing, all of your family service context. This is important for capturing your service delivery, for identifying your needs, for measuring your outcomes and improving your service delivery and telling your story. All of those things that we typically do with our data in Head Start. And it also provides insight into the needs and strengths of our families, and also what you're seeing in the community. There's needs, but there's also new resources that are happening out there. So document, document everything.

And—and it's also important to identify what it is you expect around a family participation so that your staff knows and communicate that to staff and to families. And David mentioned how families and staff have a lot going on these days. Some are working in their home schooling and struggling, so it's really important to consider the support that we are giving them. David, before we do our poll, did you want to make some points about this? Or, should we ...



David: Yeah, well, just quickly I want to go back because I saw a question. Someone had a question about what I was referring to when I mentioned, you know, sharing—electronic sharing of documentation. And essentially what you really want to do is make sure people's personal protective information is protected, it's safe. So you can send information through secure methods by encrypting it and that sort of thing.

So I think that's what I was referring to. You don't want to have people sending information, you know, with their social security number or stuff like that just loosely through email, without it being encrypted or something that way in which it's protected. So you can go ahead and go to the poll.

Karen: OK. So our poll—our final question, poll No. 3, what strategies are you using to encourage family participation in modified services? Is it regular contact with families? Providing tablets, computers, or other necessary technologies? We've heard a lot about programs doing that. Some programs are providing Wi-Fi. Is it contact via telephone, text, or email? Video conferencing with children and families? Mental health, tele-health call? Deliver—delivery of food and supplies? Excuse me, and that "other" category. What else that we haven't captured that you may be doing? And we know that there's been just fabulous things that has just stepped up, right, from day one and did what needed to be done in an amazing way.

David: Right, and then what you can see here is that obviously the regular contact with family, contact via telephones, text, or email, which is to be expected. Video conferencing, which is significantly high, which is great. Again, thinking outside of the box and servicing families through a sort of the family engagement methods that are not necessarily typical. Deliveries of food and supplies to families. So there are a number of ways in which the Head Start is extending themselves to support families through this difficult time, which is great. A small percentage of them—

Karen: I see people have commented. Learning Genie is something that they use. Provided a drive-through family engagement kits such as yoga mat, jumped ropes—awesome—to support physical well-being for both the caregiver and the children. That's one I haven't heard. Weekly packets. OK. Is that a specific question here? OK, OK. Just want to, as we go back to think about once again, our core question. What is our strategy to address current communities, family, and child needs, in the present environment? And we talked a lot about the importance of making connections between planning and good data, executing those plans. And hopefully we've given you an opportunity to reflect upon these ERSEA questions and think about your ERSEA services, your adaptation to the way you deliver the ERSEA services and your program's services in general, during these challenging times. I think David has a few closing remarks before we move on to resources.

David: Yes. Karen. Thank you. So one of the things I think again, it's important to reiterate, the goal is for grantees to think analytically and strategically, in an effort to try and maintain the funding enrollment. We obviously expect that you will embrace the flexibilities that we refer to and be realistic about the situation that you're facing providing services in a virtual space. But again, you heard the reframe of documenting your efforts because, you know, again, it will really help the Office of Head Start better understand some of the wonderful things that you share with us via the polls. You get a better insight into the ways in which you're connecting

with families, the ways in which you're supporting families. And it's not the typical way in which we operate and some of it falls under the guise of yes, what we would be doing under family engagement in special circumstances. However, this is so far outside of the norm. So just document what you're doing and continue to do the great work that's happening with respect to eligibility, recruitment, selection, enrollment, and of course, attendance.

Karen: That's an important message and it's just great how supportive OHS has been to programs in these past challenging, trying times. It's nice to see the trust and—and—and, you know, the ability for programs to do what they need to do. So, let's think about our resources and take a look at them. In addition to the resources that are attached to this—to this presentation, you should also have the ACF IM that people have been questioning about. That is one of the handouts, in addition to the other ones. But I also want to mention that on ECLKC, we have what we refer to as ERSEA brief. A tip-sheet-like document for each of the ERSEA letters.

And the other—other ones that we mentioned on the MSW—the Management Systems Wheel pandemic version—and this, the pandemic community update are also in ECLKC for future reference. So check out ECLKC. If you're not on MyPeers, there is an ERSEA group. There are many [Inaudible] that you may be interested in. I'm getting a lot of feedback from my phone here, so I apologize. Maybe someone's not on mute that can mute themselves. So check out MyPeers, lots of ERSEA questions, some of the same questions and dialogue that I actually see in the Q&A.

So you may find it helpful to check in with your peers about how they're doing remote enrollment and things of that nature. I think you'll find it helpful. And of course your regional Training and Technical Assistance network is always available to you. So go ahead and hook up with them as needed. I think at this point we can move on to Q&A. I'm going to defer to, I think David and Colleen.

David: Yeah, I think we're going to get some help from our call tech team to guide us through some other questions that they've looked at that we should be responding to and that we can respond to.

Colleen Rathgeb: OK. Great. David, this is Colleen. So I was just going to, look at the questions. I've just been—as I've been listening to this great webinar ... Through all of the questions that people have been asking. So thank you guys so much for that. And I saw some big—some big themes emerging that I've thought we would just ... I could run through some of the themes and then different folks on the line might be able to comment on different questions. And also I could lay out some things from the OHS perspective with David of what we know right now, or what we don't know, so what we'll be able to be hopefully providing in the near future.

So one big question that we saw in the chat today and we've seen on other webinars is obviously a lot of uncertainty about what services will look like next year and how programs should be reopening. What does OHS expect when grantees would start reopening? And again what those services would look like? And I think ... I just want to start by acknowledging all of the uncertainty that's out there. And we absolutely are working with—with you through this and know that right now, there are not a lot of concrete answers about exactly what the

programs will look like exactly when they open and when they will. And so some of the things we absolutely can reiterate is we absolutely ... Health and safety is obviously the top priority. And we know that programs as they look to, you know, when folks decided to close, when they also are ready to reopen, we'll really be looking for the local public health authorities, as well as CDC, and states to really be able to guide that reopening process.

And we are, at the Office of Head Start, are in the process of really being able to give a clear guidance about the types of things like what we expect as far as whether there would be reduced class sizes or reduce ratios, or how the services may look very different than what we normally would expect. And things like, realize that enrollment might look very different. So some of the specific questions that came through that I can definitely speak to. Had a couple people that ask questions along the lines of, if I have to open with limited enrollment, either because of requirements in my state or because that's what we think is the safe way to operate, will that impact my funding? Will I lose funding because they have to open with a limited enrollment next year.

And we want to take that off folks' worry list. We understand, just like we have said right now, we want programs to continue to report their monthly enrollment, but we are not using the enrollment during this public health crisis period to be looking at the under enrollment process. And so we know that we will continue to have to look at that very differently, depending on how long the crisis goes on.

And we absolutely expect that programs will open with reduced enrollment, and that is not something that folks should be worried about. We also got a lot of questions that were very focused on ERSEA and with all this expertise we have with us today, both from David at OHS, and from all of the folks, Karen, and Jackie, and, John, and others from PMFO that are on the phone, I want us to focus the questions there. So some of the big questions I saw were lots of questions about how to determine income. Whether stimulus payments counted, the new unemployment counted, whether the poverty guidelines would be changed or increased. And then lots of questions around how do you document current income?

So lots of questions about Departments of Labor being closed and how to use self-declarations. How to determine the right period of time, if family's incomes have really changed? How to do phone interviews particularly around when can't see the documents? So I think there were a whole series of questions around that. We also saw a series of questions around how the 10% over income and the 35% over income interact. And that's something that's obviously not specific to this moment in time, but it's something that is a constant, I think, struggle to think about those two different categories and how they interact.

So I thought I could just say a few things about the first category I saw about how to determine income and then could see who else on the phone wants to jump in more broadly on that. Does that sound good for the other presenters?

Karen: Mm-hmm. Yep.

David: Yep, it does.

Colleen: So one—one very concrete question we got is, "Do the COVID stimulus payments or the additional [Inaudible] towards income?" And they do not. So we have made a determination—a policy determination at the Office of Head Start that the stimulus payments under the CARES Act and the additional unemployment, that they do not count towards income.

And we had somebody ask, very smartly, said, "Where is it in writing?" Like where is there a definitive statement in writing from the Office of Head Start that those do not count? And so we want to make sure, we'll make sure folks get this actual link, but on the ECLKC, there is a, right on the front page, there is something you can click on. It's got all the information related to COVID-19. And if you click on that link right off the main page of ECLKC, you will see a document from May 21, just a few weeks ago, that is called Responding to Head Start Grantee Questions on COVID-19. And the very first question there is: Will the stimulus payments made to individuals who lost unemployment and the additional unemployment count for income purposes?"

And it clear—it says they do not. So we want to make sure, we know there's been a lot of information coming at grantees and that we are doing our best, but it's probably, even when I was just looking for this at this minute thought, "Well, that's not as easy to find as I thought it should be." So we want to continue to keep improving ways you guys can find that information. But that is something that we've really we have a clear statement that those do not count. The other things a lot of folks did ask about, you know, are the poverty guidelines going to be increased or changed? And that is something that at the Office of Head Start, we do not have control over.

The poverty guidelines are set for the whole federal government for many benefit programs and they are not changing based on anything in the current climate. And so everything that, besides the COVID stimulus and the unemployment, but not counting the new CARES Act, unemployment not counting towards eligibility. Other things as far as how to determine income have stayed the same. I'll pause and see if other folks want to jump in any of the questions around how to determine income before we turn to the questions around, how do you document.

Karen: I'll say a little bit about that and others can join in. And again the main point being that the Performance Standards have not changed, so they definitely give specifics on how to calculate income. And I know we've had several questions about projecting forward. The standards talk about the relevant time period between the prior 12 months, but there's also some language about the ability to take into consideration any change that has happened to the family, so I would encourage people to look at that language and develop their policies with that in mind.

The other thing that people have talked about signatures, electronic enrollment. I know you'll see on MyPeers that people are doing all kinds of things for the signatures, whether it's taking a picture with a phone, some people are using specific applications that do it. But again, looking at the standards, they really don't talk about signatures. There's two cases when they're about declarations that you need a signature on. Probably your state is more specific about

submission requirements, but again, you can certainly find ways to make that happen electronically.

John: Karen, this is John. Karen, just real quick. Since you were also an editor on this, say a few words about

the ERSEA: Strategies During a Pandemic because I think that also captures some of the spirit, of what you talked about.

Karen: Yeah, OK. Again we're talking about some of the things that we did talk about during the content of this, thinking about how were you going to do these things electronically? How are you going to communicate changes to your staff? Let me think about some of the other things that—that came up. Making sure that leadership is involved in all of these decisions around—around ERSEA involved in the development and approval of the selection criteria. Communicating the selection criteria changes to related stakeholders.

Again we talk about the need for technology. Monitoring those electronic recruitment efforts. You really want to think about your whole, if you're doing things differently what's your whole oversight system going to be like, as you're doing these things. If people who are working remotely, to do your enrollment, how are you training them? How are you making sure that they can connect with the program? And maybe they're doing it in their own program. So again, just the flexibility and the foresight to figure out how we can do things differently.

David: Yeah, Karen, you know, you talked about leadership in the very beginning. I suggested or I alluded to the fact that a lot of grantees may be engaging in governing body, the Policy Council and community partners in some of the decision-making. Obviously, you know, what's interesting is COVID, it took us by surprise, right? So grantees were ... Over the past few years, the Office of Head Start, the National Centers have been really instrumental in getting grantees to think about how they can leverage technology in different ways to support families participating in services.

And in some of our regions, in particular, because the demographic sort of spacing technology becomes critically important as you're working with your governing body, you know, engaging them, the Policy Council who may not be able to get to the shared physical space. So all of this becomes a more applicable now, given what we're—how we're operating in the COVID. And so given the fact that, you know, the governing body has legal and fiduciary responsibility for the actual Head Start funding ... The grantee has a fiduciary responsibility. What you really want to do is make sure that any decisions that are being made, that it's going to be a alteration or significant change in how you're operating, is that you're communicating with the governing body, the Policy Council.

You're getting their requisite approvals, you're keeping them up to date. Because that way, you know, again, the supports that you're going to need in terms of that documentation of these significant shifts in an effort to be responsive to children and families, you're going to have got the requisite approvals. People will be supportive of what you need. And then that composition that we always talk about with respect to the governing body, the legal, the fiscal, the early child education, because ratios are going to change because there may be issues with respect to staffing and those sort of things you really want to be able to ensure that you're getting the

proper guidance. There's some concerns around coming back into a shared physical space. What that might mean for—for staff.

And even right now, staff that are supporting families remotely. So just knowing that you have your early childhood folks on the governing body informing some of the decisions that the management staff needed to make, I think is really reassuring. And that's kind of where we want to go with respect to ERSEA. As I said earlier, you know, where you're at, where were many grantees are at in their program operating, a lot of families have already sort of had the eligibility verifications addressed. But now given COVID-19, one of the things that we believe is that there are going to be a lot more families that weren't previously eligible, they're going to be eligible now.

So how do you sort of do your due diligence and sort of again, go through the crisis of verifying eligibility, getting the requisite documentation that you may need to justify sort of a change in status for a family. And again, I think grantees are savvy to be able to figure some of this out. And again then the Office of Head Start is constantly thinking about the guidance that will help grantees make some of those decisions. And so we're learning and being responsive, in the same way that grantees are in this moment. And so as questions arise, we may not always have the answer in the moment, but we will get the answers that you need.

Karen: Yeah. A couple of questions here. Someone said, "Wondering about qualifying parents with unemployment. Improving isn't stable at this time." And again that standard does talk about if the family can demonstrate a significant change in income, program staff may consider current income circumstances. Someone said they used the Department of Labor for their wage increase and they're closed right now. You can do declarations for, and that's right in the standards, from the employer. written statements from employers, including individuals who are self-employed. So check out those standards.

One last point about enrollment, you know, Colleen will say that the ratios, you may not be able to serve as many children in the center-based but I believe, and you guys correct me if I'm wrong, you could still have some center base, and go on serving some children remotely. It might make more sense for some families based on medical [Inaudible] of maybe families or children themselves. So there's different ways and different combinations to go about thinking about how you will do your enrollment.

David: Right, Karen, and again, we're—we're—we're trying ... They're sort of not necessarily separate, right? The conversation on ERSEA, that ERSEA implications will inform decisions about reopening. But yeah, we do know that given some of the restrictions from the different states and what grantees are going to be allowed to do, and again with group sizing changing, you know, based upon Department of Health regulations. There will be grantees that will continue to serve a significant portion of their families in virtual spaces. And then also with some resumption of services in their facilities.

Karen: Yeah, and I see some questions that really would be worthy of conversation. Maybe the program specialist really like engage in the nuances of the situation.

Colleen: I think that's—I think that's all exactly right. And I think that answered a lot of the questions around how to document. And Karen, I liked that you keep kind of pulling back to

look what's really in the standards and maybe the ways programs have been doing some of the ERSEA practices is going beyond what's in the standards. And then as David was talking about the idea of if—if folks are making changes, making sure that is in conjunction with their Policy Council and their—and their board—and their board. Cause some of the other specific questions we saw related to that was, you know, whether programs can use self-declarations or how you do that, or again, that period of time that we can be considering income?

And again it's—it's—it's very—the standard that Karen called out saying, you know programs may consider current income circumstances. And what exactly, you know, current is—is not defined. And so I think programs have some flexibility in thinking about, you know, what really is the best illustration of the current family income. Particularly if they're not working. If they've lost your job, again, or if there is no family income, and we saw that question about the Department of Labor being closed quite a few times came up in the questions. Which, if, ultimately it says that the family self-declaration can be used, if there are no other way to document that.

John: Colleen, there was a question about the flexibilities and any information that we might be able to provide with respect when they will no longer apply. And we're not at a place where we can really say that there is kind of a timetable, correct?

Colleen: That's right. I mean, I think that we have definitely said, you know, we understand right now we want programs to report, but that we are not using that information to—to be considered under enrolled and that we would absolutely be alerting grantees in advance of any change to that. So right now, just because of the uncertainty, you know, we don't know when programs would be able to be in a place to be serving their full funded enrollment right now. And so as you guys have talked about on the webinar, we really want programs still to be thinking about what they can do. Karen talked about, you know, some creative ways that programs, as we enter the program year, we may be serving some children in person and other families remotely.

There may, you know, different options like that. So we certainly want to see how many children we can reach. But there would absolutely be well noticed in advance. If things were back in a place that we would be expecting programs to be actually reaching their full enrollment consistently. There was a couple of questions that came up around the how to think about the 10% and the—the 10% of over income—to any income. And then the 35% that programs can serve in the 100 to 130% income range. Do—do folks that probably would know how to speak about all of the complexities of ERSEA, better than me on the phone want to talk about that? Or I can also take a shot, but I'll let others see if they want to first.

Karen: So I—I can give a try based on my experience as a director. I think of that 10% as within normal program operations. And I really was using it to just slightly extreme the Federal Poverty Guidelines. And when I think of that the 135% of poverty guidelines, I really feel like I need to have a clear rationale as to why I'm using this, why it's needed, how I'm meeting the needs of those families under the Federal Poverty Guidelines. I feel like I need to think more carefully and justify those more so than that 10%. But still that 10% I'm just using, to just the people whose incomes are just slightly over. I don't know. Does that make sense?

David: It does. I'm sorry, go ahead Colleen. I was going to say it does. Go ahead, Colleen.

Colleen: Sorry, this is terrible. I think the idea that the extra 35% in the 130 that programs really need to be able to think about are they already serving all of the children otherwise eligible and that that is kind of a special category that's reserved up for programs when they can really feel like they haven't been able to document that they have served the otherwise, that the group is an important distinction. And then also, you know, that that 10% that has been there for a long time and that that, you know, could be used to serve children a little bit above the poverty line or higher if it made sense and for some reason that was really a very needy child, even if the income was above.

But David, now—[Overlapping conversation]

David: The only other thing I would add to what you guys have both shared is again, and this is, wow, going back a few years when I was a director, when we looked at the 10% over the income, we looked at it in a very similar way that Karen described, but then the selection criteria, right? Just because a family's over the income and they may be a little bit more over the income than, you know, the way in which we took—we look at the 10% or slightly over. Those other factors in terms of selection criteria have to be evaluated as well. Because, you know, again, the prioritization and the number of points that you give for certain situations that a family might be in, can be [Inaudible]. I've had situations where families were over their income, but they had lost their home and they were living in a shelter. So I think you have to look at all pieces of ERSEA when you're evaluating, making these types of decisions.

[Overlapping conversation]

Karen: While I was trying to explain my rationale, I got my 35s and my 30s mixed up, so I wanted to clarify that it's an additional 35% of participants whose incomes are below 130% of poverty line. I think I rehearsed that—reversed it to 30 [Inaudible]. [Laughing]

Colleen: I do that all the time.

Karen: Not as young as I used to be, you know.

Colleen: But I think David's point is exactly right is that you really want to think about, you know, that—is your selected criteria identifying families with a really big need and they are the neediest families, even if their income is above and that that gives you the flexibility to serve—to serve families whose income may be significantly above if your selection criteria is—is identifying them as—as some of the neediest children.

Karen: Absolutely, yep. OK, should I move us on to the evaluation slide at this point?

John: Karen, I might have one more for Colleen and David. I'm putting it in right now. Probably, David, look at the presenter chat, and just see ...

Colleen: I can take that. There's a question about migrant and seasonal and the—the priority both on—on families that—that—that migrate, within the 24—within last two years, families that have been migrating and that the majority of the income come from agricultural sources. And so we do know that there have been programs that have raised concerns around the issues



impacting essential workers—farm workers right now, and the limits on—on movement. And so the ...

We are, you know, we understand the—the pressure there. The majority of income coming from agricultural work as part of the eligibility criteria for migrant [Inaudible], is a statutory requirement, and so that is not something that OHS has the authority to—to waive. But it is—it is something that we understand has—has—has—created some issues. We also know that, you know, that the migrate—the—the prac—the 24 months moving, the migrating is just a priority. And so that is something that programs are less tied to. So there are many things I know is probably in the category, in the world of ERSEA. There are many things that are governed really strictly by the Head Start Act. And so the Office of Head Start is limited somewhat in when we can make changes or accommodations in this area.

John: And Colleen and David, there was one more I put into presenter chat just now. It's more of a reminder, but if you don't mind.

Colleen: Sure. So there is a great question about people having a hard time obtaining parents' signatures and to pick up on what David and Karen were saying before to, you know, guide people back to—to what is actually the required in the Head Start Performance Standards. While many programs probably have a requirement around a parent signature that is actually not a requirement in the Head Start Performance Standards. You do have to be able to document, have staff document and sign that they, you know, what they did to verify, but a parental signature is not—is not required in the federal requirements.

Karen: I see people asking for the slides and we can provide what we call a three-up with pictures of images of the slide deck, when this was posted to ECLKC. We'll include it in the posting.

John: And we'll have to address ...

Karen: ... about selection criteria, I mean, we talked about that during the content that—that you're using your data from the community to develop your selection criteria, and that might change based on the impact that COVID has had in your community. And that that may be part of what's in the selection criteria. John, you were saying something?

John: Yeah, we just have one final question. Thank you, Jackie. We're going to have some discussions about whether we can translate to Spanish. We'll work, David through you on that one and see what we can do.

David: Yes, sir.

Karen: OK. We have ... [Overlapping conversation] I want to put up the link to our evaluation survey. If you could go ahead and use that link to do an electronic survey, we really appreciate you answering that; that's our data for our own continuous improvement and we absolutely use it and value it. So thank you for your time in completing that.

John: And Karen, everybody who completes that gets a certificate of participation. So, that same sentence, to complete that.

Karen: That's fine, that's fine. [Laughing] Building a sentence, OK. I think at this time we can thank everyone and begin to close out this session. I thank you for the opportunity to talk with you today about ERSEA and for all your feedback and your participation, and wish you luck in this important work that you do.

David: Thanks, Karen. This is David on behalf of the Office of Head Start, I'll speak from my view. It's always a great opportunity to be able to sort of provide what we believe is meaningful information that's going to inform the work. But also what's really enriching is the chat and the questions that come in, that will put the Office of Head Start in the better position to be able to continue to provide guidance for you. Again, understanding under these really difficult times that grantees are doing the best that they can to continue to support and engage families. And to Karen's point, we thank you for that.

John: So on behalf of both OHS and PMFO, thank you all. Just as a reminder, on July 1, we'll have our conversation on partnerships, including Early Head Start- Child Care Partnerships. So if you can join OHS and PMFO for that one also from 2 o'clock to 3:30 p.m. on July 1 Eastern Time, that would be great, and just we'll leave this slide up so that people can complete the evaluation. Thank you so much for your participation. Colleen, thank you for the Q&A support. Hannah and Sarah, thank you, and Susan and Jackie thank you very much. Everybody, please have a great afternoon.