

Early Head Start Expansion and Child Care Partnerships FAQs, Volume 2 June 30, 2014

Questions about the Initiative

1. Will there be a separate FOA for American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) and Migrant and Seasonal programs?

Yes, there will be separate FOAs specifically for AIAN and Migrant and Seasonal programs. The Department of Human Services' Grants Forecast for each opportunity is listed below:

American Indian and Alaska Native Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grants:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/hhsgrantsforecast/index.cfm?switch=grant.view&gff_grants_forecastInfoID=70263

Migrant and Seasonal Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Grants:
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/hhsgrantsforecast/index.cfm?switch=grant.view&gff_grants_forecastInfoID=70262

2. Are there five years of guaranteed funding for grant award winners, or is that pending legislation?

Section II. Award Information of the FOA states awards made under this announcement are subject to availability of federal funds. Applicants must submit an annual 12-month budget. OHS will award successful applicants a grant with a project period of five years. However, the amount of the annual funding is subject to the appropriations passed by Congress and signed into law by the President annually. Annual appropriations could increase, decrease or remain level.

Questions about the Grant Application Process

3. Can an entity apply for Partnership funding *and* Expansion funding?

Applicants have the choice of applying in *one* of three ways: 1) EHS-CC Partnerships 2) Non- Partnership Early Head Start Expansion or 3) mix of both EHS-CC Partnerships and Expansion. However, applicant entities may submit only one application per service area, regardless of how they choose to apply. ACF will review only one application for a service area from any applicant.

4. Who is eligible to apply? Are EHS delegates able to apply?

Under *Section III.1. Eligible Applicants* of the FOA, eligible applicants are any public entities, including states, or non-profit or for-profit private entities, including community-based and faith-based organizations, pursuant to section 645A(d) of the Head Start 42 U.S.C. § 9840a(d).

An EHS delegate is an agency that an EHS grantee contracts with to deliver some or all of the services for which that EHS grantee is responsible. EHS delegate agencies are eligible to apply for the Early Head Start Expansion and EHS-CC Partnership funding.

- 5. If a current EHS grantee applies for the EHS expansion opportunity, would the answer to Form 424 Question No. 2 be “new”, “continuation” or “other”?**
New.
- 6. What are the points awarded if an entity is applying to serve a high poverty zip code identified in the Appendix of the FOA? What if an entity is applying to serve a federally designated Promise Zone?**
Section V.1 Criteria of the FOA states if the applicant entity is applying to serve a high poverty zip code, it will automatically receive 5 points. If the applicant entity is applying to serve a Promise Zone, it will automatically receive 3 points.
- 7. If my agency is applying for EHS expansion, can the application include costs to address funds that enable them to build/renovate new facilities?**
Applications for EHS expansion can include such requests. Applicants should review *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission*, The Project Description for instructions on construction.
- 8. How is service area defined? Can a service area include multiple counties?**
Service area may refer to zip code, city, county, or state.
- 9. How many partners can be included within one application for funding?**
The applicant must determine the number of partners it proposes. ACF does not provide direct guidance or instruction in the development of an applicant’s project design or in writing their applications. Applicants should use their best judgment in determining whether they are able to meet the requirements contained in the funding opportunity announcement (FOA), whether they are able to develop an application they believe to be responsive to the FOA and in designing and writing their applications. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using the criteria described in Section V.1 of the FOA. The review panels will use the FOA as their principal guidance available to them in the same way that it is the principal guidance for applicants.
- 10. If an organization operates both Head Start and state funded childcare programs, and that organization partners with its own child care program to provide comprehensive services to the children enrolled in the childcare programs, will the application be awarded the extra points for proposing all partnership slots?**
Applicants that propose 100 percent partnership slots will receive 10 points automatically.
- 11. I am a family child care provider that is interested in applying for EHS-CC Partnership funding; can OHS or OCC help me find a partner agency?**
No, OHS and OCC cannot provide any assistance to any applicant. ACF does not provide direct guidance or instruction in the development of an applicant’s project design or in writing their applications. Applicants should use their best judgment in determining whether they are able to meet the requirements contained in the funding opportunity announcement (FOA), whether they are able to develop an application they believe to be responsive to the FOA and in designing and writing their applications. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using the criteria described in

Section V.1 of the FOA. The review panels will use the FOA as their principal guidance available to them in the same way that it is the principal guidance for applicants.

12. What is DRS? How does DRS impact partnerships? If I am a current EHS grantee competing under DRS, am I eligible to apply for an EHS-CC Partnership grant?

A grantee competing for funding under DRS is eligible to apply for funding. The regulation for the Designation Renewal System, Head Start Performance Standard 45 CFR 1307 can be found at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/hspss/1307>

13. How about the subsidy fund vouchers from our Dept. of Social Services or other childcare resource and referral agencies who grant subsidy scholarships to our individually enrolled families....can we count these funds as non-federal match? We cannot answer that question because we do not know if those funds originated at the federal level or are already used as match. The following is a useful resource for information concerning the non-Federal share: <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/early-head-start-child-care-partnerships>

14. As part of this proposal, if our EHS-Child Care partnership collaborates with our local Partnership for Young Children county agency and we are granted a certain amount of state “Smart Start” funds to enhance the quality of care, length of the day, etc., will we be allowed to count these funds as non-federal match because they flow from the state legislature?

If these funds have no federal origin and the state appropriated funds are not used as federal match, then they can be used as match. The following is a useful resource for information concerning the non-federal share:

http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/pi/2012/resour_pri_002_021012.html

15. How does my organization apply for a non-Federal share waiver?

To receive a waiver - or a reduction in the required non-Federal share, the grantee agency must provide the ACF Regional Office written documentation of need. This request may be submitted with the grant proposal document or during the budget period if a situation arises that will make it impossible to meet the requirement. Approval of the waiver request cannot be assumed by the grantee agency without written notice from the ACF Regional Office. OHS issued a recent program instruction to make issues related to this match, including waiver requests. Information on the non-federal share waiver can be found at:

http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/pi/2012/resour_pri_002_021012.html

16. What is the minimum number of slots required for an entity to apply for this opportunity?

Although ACF is not setting a minimum number of participant slots for which applicants must apply, ACF *recommends* applicants propose no less than 72 slots, which can be allocated across multiple child care center and/or family child care home partner sites. ACF recognizes that applicants in rural communities, or organizations with existing infrastructure to support the necessary services, may propose fewer than 72 slots. The number of slots suggested is a guideline to ensure that new programs are serving enough children to be cost effective. Applicants should demonstrate in their

application how many children they propose to serve and demonstrate that their organization has the infrastructure and capacity to serve that number.

17. Can my organization submit its own application, but also be listed as a potential partner entity on another organization's application?

Yes.

18. Can an applicant entity apply for funding below the Award Floor?

Yes, applicants can apply for funding below the Award Floor.

19. What ages can be served through this grant?

EHS-CC Partnership slots will serve children in center-based settings from birth to 36 months. Additionally, EHS-CC Partnership slots will serve children in family child care settings from birth to 48 months. Early Head Start Expansion slots, consistent with regulations, may serve pregnant women and children from birth to 36 months in center-based settings.

20. Can partnership settings serve pregnant women?

No, pregnant women cannot be served with EHS-CC Partnership grant funding.

21. My organization is submitting an application for EHS-CC Partnership funding. I am confused; in order to receive 10 points does my organization have to have 100 percent of our children receiving a child care subsidy? Or to receive 10 points, does the organization just need to apply for 100 percent EHS-CC Partnership funding?

Under *Section V.1 Criteria* of the FOA states, applicant entities that propose to provide 100 percent of its services through an EHS-CC Partnership will automatically receive 10 points. In addition, the subsidy requirements are identified in *Section IV.2 Content and Form of Application Submission* of the FOA.

22. How are high poverty zip codes calculated?

In this funding opportunity announcement (FOA), eligible high poverty geographic areas are calculated at the ZIP Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) level. The ZCTA is the closest and most reliable approximation available for estimates of ZIP Code-level poverty rates. For the purposes of this FOA, high poverty areas are defined as ZCTAs where at least 33 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level and in which at least 120 children younger than age five reside. Individuals who are enrolled in college are excluded from the poverty rate calculations. ZCTAs are Census-designated boundaries based on, but not necessarily consistent with, U.S. Postal Service (USPS) ZIP Code boundaries. USPS ZIP Codes are designed to meet the day-to-day operational needs of the U.S. Postal Service and change periodically; however, the boundaries of ZCTAs remain consistent over time.

The data used to make this determination are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008-2012 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates. This source is the only reliable national source for estimating ZIP Code-level poverty rates and population counts. The ACS data used to calculate the poverty rates is reported at the ZIP Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) level. For ease of administration, the eligible high poverty areas listed in the Appendix of this FOA are listed at the ZIP Code level. However, a single ZCTA may

include one or more ZIP Codes. Since eligibility is calculated at the ZCTA level, all ZIP Codes in an eligible ZCTA are included in the Appendix list. This is why, in some cases, ZIP Codes that are entirely hospitals, universities, etc. may appear on the list. Additionally, although ZCTA's are geographically-based units, Census Tracts are smaller population-based units, and thus were not used for calculating high poverty geographic areas under this FOA.

23. If applying for EHS expansion, it can only be in the center-based model, right?

No, new entities or existing Head Start and EHS grantees applying for EHS Expansion must propose full-day, full-year EHS models but have the option of proposing center-based and or family child care homes.

Questions about Program Implementation

24. For existing grantees applying for expansion, would the award be added to the current grant award number OR a new grant number with a different five year cycle than what is already in place for those grantees already on a five year grant cycle? Is this different for expansion-only versus mixed grants?

All grants rewarded as a result of this FOA will be new five year grants with a new corresponding grant number.

25. The FOA states that Kentucky is allocated \$7,106,102: is that the total amount that Kentucky applicants have been allocated? As in, is the assumption that one applicant might receive \$1,421,220.40 per year for five years? Or is Kentucky allocated \$7,106,102 per year for five years; so Kentucky's total allocation would be \$35,530,510?

Funding is available within each state based on the number of young children in poverty. *Section II. Award Information* of the FOA states awards made under this announcement are subject to availability of federal funds. Applicants must submit an annual 12-month budget. For example, if an individual applicant was awarded \$1.2 million in the first year of a five year award, and EHS CC funding (appropriations) remained at the same level for the next four years, the grantee would be awarded \$1.2 million years 2 through 5. However, the amount of the annual funding is subject to the appropriations passed by Congress and signed into law by the President annually. Annual appropriations could increase, decrease or remain level. While all future funding is dependent on the annual appropriations, applicants should assume that the amount of the allocation would be available each year.

26. Is there a guideline to reimburse child care partners? Does each partner need to receive the same amount per child?

There are no guidelines. Funding to partners could vary based on the number of eligible EHS children enrolled in each partner site and the improvements needed in each site in order to meet EHS requirements. ACF does not provide direct guidance or instruction in the development of an applicant's project design or in writing their applications.

Applicants should use their best judgment in determining whether they are able to meet the requirements contained in the funding opportunity announcement (FOA), whether they are able to develop an application they believe to be responsive to the FOA and in

designing and writing their applications. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using the criteria described in Section V.1 of the FOA. The review panels will use the FOA as their principal guidance available to them in the same way that it is the principal guidance for applicants.

27. If an EHS-CC Partnership is a separate grant from existing Head Start or EHS grants, is the grantee required to have a separate Policy Council?

Existing Head Start or Early Head Start grantees with existing policy councils are not required to form a separate Policy Council if awarded an EHS-CC Partnership grant.

28. If I am awarded EHS-CC Partnership funding, do I need to develop a contract between all the partner agencies?

Applicant entities have the discretion to decide what type of agreement they intend to form with partner agencies. That agreement must fully describe the roles and responsibilities of all partner agencies.

29. Do Early Head Start programs require fees from parents?

No. EHS programs are prohibited from charging parents for program services. However, EHS programs that provide 10 hours or more per day and use Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funds to defray the cost are allowed under Section 645(b) of the Head Start Act programs to collect co-payments that are required in conjunction with a collaboration to provide extended day services. An Early Head Start program could collect a co-payment that is required as a condition of receiving a CCDF subsidy; however, to support the EHS-CC partnership, the policy of co-payments could be waived.

30. Are teachers with associate's or bachelor's degrees required to pursue a CDA and/or be trained in early childhood education with an infant/toddler focus?

Early Head Start teachers must have a "minimum" of a CDA and training with an infant toddler focus. Teachers who have a degree or other credential in early childhood education with a focus on infants and toddlers (at least commensurate to what is required for an Infant Toddler CDA) do not need a CDA. All teaching staff is expected to meet the qualification requirements within 18 months of receiving the grant.

31. Can you provide more explanation about how the subsidy for 25 percent of children is expected to work? Is the funding effectively spread across the children in the site or should children receive different services if they're funded by one or both funding streams?

Project budgets for the EHS-CC Partnership applications must also reflect child care subsidies for no less than 25 percent of the proposed slots. Grantees must ensure that children whose families experience job loss or loss of child care subsidies will continue to be served.

For example, if an organization has four partner sites with 25 children enrolled at each site, then at any given time 25 of the 100 children must have a child care subsidy. The following is a useful resource for information on maximizing resources when there is more than one source of funding: <https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/early-head-start-child-care-partnerships>

32. How is the term "full-day" defined for the purposes of these grants—six hours? 10 hours?

For EHS-CC Partnership Grants, entities are expected to provide full-day, full-year services. Partner sites are already serving working families. The Head Start Act defines “full working day” as a minimum of 10 hours. For EHS Expansion Grants, applicants at a minimum must meet Head Start regulations that define full day to mean six hours a day or more, and for Early Head Start Programs must operate at least 48 weeks per year.