



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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Program Performance Summary Report

To: Authorizing Official/Board Chairperson

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From: Responsible HHS Official

Date: 03/04/2020

Dr. Deborah Bergeron
Director, Office of Head Start

From January 27, 2020 to January 31, 2020, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area One (FA1) monitoring review of the Bear River Head Start Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This report contains information about the grantee's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or Public Law 110-134, Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your governing body, policy council, parents, and staff for their engagement in the review process. The FA1 review allows the OHS to understand how programs are progressing in providing services in the 5-year grant cycle. The report includes the performance measures used to understand grantee progress towards program goals. You can use this report to identify where your program was able to describe progress toward implementing program services that promote quality outcomes for children and families. Please contact your Regional Office for guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Your Regional Office will follow up on the content of this report and can work with you to identify resources to support your program's continuous improvement.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT

Ms. Cheryl Lutz, Regional Program Manager
Ms. Sarah Thurgood, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
Ms. Sarah Thurgood, Head Start Director
Ms. Sarah Thurgood, Early Head Start Director

Glossary of Terms

Opportunity for Continuous Improvement (OCI)	An OCI is identified when the grantee is determined compliant in an area; however, through intentional, continuous improvement strategies, the agency has the opportunity to enhance overall program quality.
Area of Concern (AOC)	An area for which the agency needs to improve performance. These issues should be discussed with the grantee's Regional Office of Head Start for possible technical assistance.
Area of Noncompliance (ANC)	An area for which the agency is out of compliance with Federal requirements (including but not limited to the Head Start Act or one or more of the regulations) in one or more areas of performance. This status requires a written timeline of correction and possible technical assistance or guidance from the grantee's program specialist. If not corrected within the specified timeline, this status becomes a deficiency.
Deficiency	<p>As defined in the Head Start Act, the term "deficiency" means:</p> <p>(A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff; (ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations; (iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management; (iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter; (v) loss of legal status (as determined by the Secretary) or financial viability, loss of permits, debarment from receiving Federal grants or contracts, or the improper use of Federal funds; or (vi) failure to meet any other Federal or State requirement that the agency has shown an unwillingness or inability to correct, after notice from the Secretary, within the period specified; <p>(B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or</p> <p>(C) an unresolved area of noncompliance.</p>



Program Design and Management

Program Design

The grantee's program design and structure takes into account community strengths and needs.

Program Management

The grantee has an approach for providing effective management and oversight of all program areas and fiduciary responsibilities.

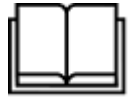
Program Governance

The grantee maintains a formal structure for program governance that includes a governing body, a policy council (or policy committee for delegates), and parent committees.

Program Design and Management Highlight

Bear River Head Start, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, served over 500 children across a 12,000 square mile service area in the states of Utah and Idaho. The Executive Director stated the grantee worked in collaboration with the policy council, Board of Directors, parents, staff members, and local partners to review internal and external data. These data sources included but were not limited to results from the Community Assessment, annual Self-Assessment, Program Information Report (PIR) data, and ongoing monitoring outcomes from all service areas. Data was used to determine trending needs among enrolled families and to inform program improvements. Improvements included converting slots from part-day to extended day to meet the needs of working families and relocating centers to areas where eligible families resided. The grantee identified through the review of PIR data that father engagement was below 30 percent. The grantee determined low engagement was due to non-custodial fathers not being engaged in program activities. The grantee responded by hiring a Father Engagement Coordinator and working with Family Advocates and teachers to engage mothers in support efforts that renewed relationships with non-custodial fathers. The program developed awareness campaigns around the importance of both parents' involvement in healthy child development, and the program created safe spaces for fathers to engage with their children. The grantee self-reported an average increase of 30 percent in father engagement as a result of these efforts.

Data analyses also resulted in the grantee increasing bilingual staff and developing translator partnerships at the University of Utah in response to increased enrollment of families speaking a home language other than English. Increased exposure to the opioid crisis and its exacerbating factors, like kinship foster care with grandparents, led to the grantee developing a partnership with Grand Families, a program offering support to grandparents navigating the court system to gain full custody of their grandchildren. The grantee's management team included content area experts who worked collectively to analyze the effectiveness of these services with reports from ChildPlus, Teaching Strategies GOLD, survey data from families and staff, and observation outcomes. The grantee determined their program design would benefit from a full-time management staff member dedicated entirely to data collection and analysis. As of February 1, 2020, the grantee employed a Data Coordinator responsible for ongoing monitoring and analysis for all service areas, measuring and evaluating program effectiveness. The Data Coordinator also worked with the Management Team to inform continuous program improvements.



Designing Quality Education and Child Development Program Services

Alignment with School Readiness

The grantee's approach to school readiness aligns with the expectations of receiving schools, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and state early learning standards.

Effective and Intentional Teaching Practices

The grantee has strategies to ensure teaching practices promote progress toward school readiness.

Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness

The grantee has an approach for ensuring teachers are prepared to implement the curriculum and support children's progress toward school readiness.

Home-based Program Services

The grantee has strategies to ensure home-based program services help parents to provide high-quality learning experiences.

Designing Quality Education and Child Development Program Services Highlight

The grantee served families through Head Start and Early Head Start center-based and home-based Services. Six of the grantee's 20 center-based classrooms were operated on elementary school campuses. This allowed the grantee direct and ongoing access to school principals and kindergarten teachers. Management team members, grantee teachers, and family services staff leveraged these relationships to maintain a continuous understanding of the expectations of receiving schools. In addition, all school districts were required to follow the Utah and Idaho State School Readiness Expectations which were aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF). The grantee's school readiness goals reflected these data sources and expectations. The grantee met school readiness goals using the Creative Curriculum and the Second Step Social-Emotional Curriculum. Goals included conflict resolution, problem-solving, number sense and recognition, letter and basic word recognition, and cause and effect. The grantee also incorporated these learning expectations into comprehensive transition processes from Early Head Start to Head Start and Head Start to kindergarten. Processes included parent involvement in their child's learning outcomes and as their child's first teacher. From the time of the first home-visit, teachers worked with parents to set their child's learning goals. Parent involvement in their child's learning continued during daily interactions with their child's teacher, at parent-teacher conferences when teachers reviewed children's progress toward school readiness goals, and through their collective work to expand children's learning. Teachers, Mentor Coaches, and the Education Management Team used the results of the collective processes, parent survey data, Teaching Strategies GOLD data, and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) results to create collaborative coaching plans and teacher learning opportunities that enhanced their professional development. This resulted in the grantee providing targeted support systems such as reflective supervision for home-visitors and family services staff, Teacher Learning Communities, and professional and ongoing coaching for all teachers. The grantee management team self-reported its supports for teachers directly impacted a continuous increase in CLASS scores and annual improvements in all learning domains from the first checkpoint to the last.



Designing Quality Health Program Services

Child Health Status and Care

The grantee has an approach for ensuring the delivery of high-quality health services.

Safety Practices

The grantee implements a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments and ensuring all staff have complete background checks.

Designing Quality Health Program Services Highlight

The grantee adopted a program-wide cultural awareness of the benefits of health on families' overall well-being and children's school readiness. Grantee management staff stated the culture included promoting their health services as a benefit to parents in navigating the complexities of the health care system. Families gained access to affordable ongoing care, and the program identified medical and dental providers who met families' needs at central locations or on-site whenever possible. Ongoing communication with families empowered the grantee to build trust with parents, to improve children's health care and status, and to ensure children were up-to-date on age-appropriate primary and preventive care. Families had ongoing access to medical, dental, and mental health service providers, and Individualized Health Care Plans to manage children's on-site follow-up care needs. Family Advocates and Health Management Team members tracked health services in ChildPlus and used data to mitigate family challenges in meeting health needs. The grantee members of the Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) supported the grantee in these processes. The committee members included but were not limited to the policy council parents, pediatric doctors, dentists, and mental health providers in Utah and Idaho, health clinic representatives, and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) representatives. The grantee worked collectively with the community experts on the HSAC to address health challenges and to create proactive plans for dealing with communicable disease outbreaks. A measles outbreak in its service area led the committee to develop targeted efforts, such as ensuring all children were up to date on immunizations, educating parents on the importance of seeking immediate healthcare for any symptoms or concerns, and practicing precautions, such as regular hand-washing and keeping children and family members clear of areas where the illness had been reported. As a result of these efforts, none of the Early Head Start and Head Start children contracted the illness. The grantee also worked with their HSAC to develop policies and procedures for effectively managing its health services. They developed ongoing monitoring plans that allowed the grantee to identify and respond to trends in health care needs; plans for creating safe environments including updating classroom, center, kitchen, and playground safety practices; and developed and updated emergency preparedness and response plans. The grantee management team stated its collective processes encouraged its culture of health and safety and supported its ability to meet 100 percent of the 30, 45, and 90-day health requirements for children and families for over 10 consecutive years.



Designing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services

Family Well-being

The grantee has an approach for collaborating with families to support family well-being.

Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports

The grantee has an approach for providing services that strengthen parenting skills.

Designing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services Highlight

The grantee shared with families the Head Start philosophy on whole family well-being from the time of recruitment and built upon these discussions during the application process, enrollment, and beyond. Family Advocates facilitated discussions with the Family Well-Being Document, which aligned with the Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework. The grantee used a strength-based approach to identify opportunities to capitalize on families' strengths while addressing challenges. The grantee worked collectively with families to connect them with existing community partners. Partners provided support systems, such as Opioid Crisis Response Services, Mental Health Services, Transportation Resources like public transportation reimbursement programs, affordable housing, and housing crisis response. Family needs and goals were tracked in ChildPlus and the data was used to expand community partnerships to best serve family needs. Partnerships included the Bear River Association of Government that provided multiple support services to families, such as access to property management companies with lenient background check processes for families recovering from previous challenges, weatherization services and energy assistance for families struggling with the cold in the winter months, first-time homebuyer assistance, emergency rent payment support, workforce development, and financial counseling. Additional community partnerships offered workshops on the Love and Logic Parenting Curriculum, a curriculum also adopted by the program. These partnerships allowed the grantee to offer parents internal and external workshops that strengthened parenting skills, reinforced parent-child relationships, and networked families throughout the grantee's service area. The Management Team stated the efforts led to more than 80 percent of families developing and meeting their family and parenting goals in the 2018 to 2019 program year.



Developing Effective Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) Strategies and Fiscal Infrastructure

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

At least 10% of the grantee's total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA or the grantee has received a waiver.

The grantee enrolls children or pregnant women who are categorically eligible or who meet defined income-eligibility requirements.

Enrollment Verification

The grantee maintains and tracks full enrollment.

Fiscal Infrastructure, Capacity, and Responsiveness

The grantee's fiscal staff have the qualifications needed to provide oversight of the grant.

The grantee has a budget development and revision process that includes stakeholders and appropriate approvals, and ensures continuous alignment with program design, goals, and objectives.

Developing Effective Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) Strategies and Fiscal Infrastructure Highlight

The grantee created an application acceptance process to take place at the centers across their expansive service area. Program staff members were trained on the application process, eligibility determinations, the documentation required to make these determinations, and the legal responsibilities of maintaining fair and lawful eligibility procedures. Applications were accepted at locations convenient for families, and eligibility files were submitted to the ERSEA department. Eligibility was initially determined by an ERSEA Specialist and re-determined by the ERSEA Manager. Families were assigned need-based selection points and families demonstrating the most significant need were enrolled immediately or as quickly as possible. Center-based and home-based staff completed a drop form if children aged out of the program or families demonstrated they were no longer in need of services. Drop forms triggered the process of vacating a slot and filling it with the most eligible family on the waitlist. At the time of the review, the grantee was fully enrolled and had been for over 5 consecutive years. The grantee enrolled more than 10 percent of its funded enrollment with children eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and maintained an active waitlist for all of its centers and program options.

The grantee, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, had an operating budget of approximately \$8 million. The grantee provided an early childhood education program with Head Start and Early Head Start grant funds, Early Head Start Expansion grant funds, additional funding from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and occasional one-time grants for targeted program improvement efforts. The 8-member financial team was led by a Fiscal Officer, who was a Certified Public Accountant with more than 20 years of experience serving nonprofit programs. The remaining team members had both professional and academic expertise in financial management. Duties were segregated among these staff members ensuring sound fiscal health and internal controls. The entire Management Team was trained on fiscal policies and procedures inclusive of allowability and cost principals. The Fiscal Officer met with the Management Team members, the Budget Committee made up of members from both governing bodies, and the full Board and the policy council to review financial reports as they related directly to program needs. These ongoing communication efforts allowed the program to determine budget allocation from one program year to the next and to identify mid-course budget corrections as needed. The Fiscal Officer stated ongoing dialogue between key stakeholders informed program improvement efforts that had a fiscal impact. For example, the fiscal team analyzed the budget to identify reallocation opportunities to support improvements such as the addition of Child Development Assistants. These staff members were qualified teachers who served as the third teacher in classrooms with higher needs and as short and long-term substitute teachers. The fiscal team also reallocated funding to support additional staff members and facility space in response to the expansion of some part-day slots to extended-day. All program decision making was a collective process between program and governing bodies and approval was received by the Board of Directors prior to submission to the Office of Head Start. At the time of the review, the Fiscal Officer stated the grantee never had findings in their single audits.

----- End of Report -----