

Program Self-Assessment Booklet 2

Management Systems: Planning

Core Question to be answered by the Self-Assessment team:

How effective is the grantee's ongoing system of program planning in supporting the implementation of quality services to children and families?

Purpose:

Planning is a multi-faceted, dynamic, and ongoing activity that involves key members of the Head Start community. Agencies that plan well are better equipped to meet the unexpected and create a vision for the future.

This booklet will help you to assess if the program meets Federal *Performance Standards* relating to planning, which includes such activities as developing the Community Assessment, formulating program goals and objectives, selection of program options, and development of written plans for implementing services. Related *Performance Standards* include: 1304.51(a); 1305.3; 1306.30(a); 1306.30(d); 1306.31-1306.36; 1308.4.

As you conduct your assessment of the program's planning process, pay close attention to how the:

- Community Assessment is used for program planning
- Program consults with the governing body, policy groups, staff and other community organizations in the process
- Program develops and revisits long-range goals and short-term program and financial objectives
- Conclusions drawn from the Community Assessment affect program plans
- Results of the Self-Assessment impact plans for program improvement
- Program's analysis of outcomes for children affects the planning process

Helpful tools to support data collection in this area follow.

Review:

Ask the Head Start director and/or responsible manager to provide you with access to the following documents:

- Community Assessment
- Statement of long-range goals and short-term objectives
- Service plans for each program area (Early Childhood Development and Health Services, Family and Community Partnerships, and Program Design and Management)
- Timelines depicting the yearly planning calendar
- Results of the most recent Self-Assessment
- Results of the most recent child outcome data
- Ongoing monitoring reports
- Results of staff, parent, and community surveys
- **Important data sources relevant to this area such as the *PRISM* report and *PIR* data**

Use the checklist below to assist your document review:

Has the Community Assessment been completed within the last three years?

Yes No Comment: _____

Has this document been updated within the last year?

Yes No Comment: _____

Does the Community Assessment include some description of the community's strengths, needs, and resources?

Yes No Comment: _____

Is there a strategic plan or other document that includes the program's long-term goals and short-term objectives?

Yes No Comment: _____

Do long-range goals and short-term objectives logically follow from the Community Assessment?

Yes No Comment: _____

Are they consistent with the philosophy of Head Start?

Yes No Comment: _____

Is information from ongoing monitoring and Self-Assessments feeding into planning activities?

Yes No Comment: _____

Interview:

The Self-Assessment team members should gather information about planning by interviewing:

- Head Start director and program planner
- Members of the governing body and Policy Council

Questions to ask:

What process is used to develop the Community Assessment, and how do you utilize the results? (i.e., Is the Community Assessment used for making plans, determining program options, and deciding how and where services will be delivered?)

What were some of the key findings from last year’s Self-Assessment?

How did these findings impact your program improvement plans?

What progress has been made in achieving goals from last year’s Self-Assessment?

Can you describe how your analysis of child outcome data has impacted program improvement planning?

How would you describe your program planning process? Who is involved? What data sources and information do you use to determine what your goals and objectives should be?

How are the governing body, policy groups, staff, and other community organizations consulted while plans are being made?

What process do you use to develop written plans? How are the plans utilized once they are written? (i.e., Do plans “sit on the shelf” or are they dynamic documents that are constantly referred to, reviewed, revised and updated as needed?)

What progress has your program made in achieving the goals and objectives contained in your strategic plan? What challenges have you faced? Have you revised any of your initial goals?

Answer if applicable to your program: If your Community Assessment indicates needs such as full day / full year or Early Head Start for children from birth to three, how does this influence the planning process?

In planning for parent involvement, does your program collect information about fathers in addition to mothers? (i.e., Do your intake forms prompt staff to include this information?)

To support transitions for young children and families, how does your Community Assessment collect information about continuity of services from pregnancy through age five?

In conducting your Community Assessment, how do you gather information on youth services to benefit siblings of Head Start children? Does your Community Assessment process include identifying marriage strengthening or marriage preparation services for couples who choose to participate?

Team Member Summary Worksheet

Summary of Results for Planning

Areas where the program is working well. Provide examples of program strengths or areas where the program exceeds *Performance Standards*:

Areas where the program needs improvement:

Additional areas of concern:
