



# Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocol

## Management Systems and Program Governance Guides

**October 7, 2013**



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## Interviews

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### Governing Body—Interview

#### Program Governance Key Indicator #1—Structure and Participation

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- ▶ Ask the governing body to describe the composition of its membership and share documentation that confirms membership and oversight responsibilities for each of the required content areas. Does the governing body have all of the following?
  - At least 1 member with fiscal/accounting background and expertise
  - At least 1 member with early childhood education and development background and expertise
  - At least 1 member who is a licensed attorney
  - Members who reflect the community served, including parents of children who are currently or were formerly enrolled in Head Start programs

If the composition of the governing body does not include individuals with the required qualifications, describe whether the program uses consultants or other individuals with relevant expertise and qualifications.

#### Program Governance Key Indicator #2—Roles, Responsibilities and Training

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- ▶ Ask the program to provide you with documentation of governing body training, (e.g., governing body meeting agendas and minutes), which you will review with staff while discussing this item.

Ask the governing body to describe the training received and provide examples of how the training has helped them make decisions about the Head Start program.

- ▶ Ask the governing body to explain their role in program planning and to provide specific examples. Did the governing body play a role in:
  - Establishing procedures and criteria for recruiting, selecting, and enrolling children
  - Selecting delegate agencies, as appropriate
  - Developing procedures for selecting Policy Council members
  - Reviewing applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding

- ▶ Ask the governing body how it ensures the financial health and well-being of the program and the fiscal integrity of the agency.

Based on the response of the governing body, do they assume responsibility for the following:

- All major financial expenditures of the agency



- The operating budget of the agency
  - The selection (except when a financial auditor is assigned by the State under State law or is assigned under local law) of independent financial auditors to report all critical accounting policies and practices to the governing body
  - The financial audit
  - The agency's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal provisions in its grant application, including implementation of corrective actions
  - Monitoring of the agency's actions to correct any audit findings and other actions necessary to comply with applicable laws (including regulations) governing financial statement and accounting practices
- ▶ Ask the governing body members to describe their level of involvement with the following required approval processes: Did the governing body review and approve the following:
- The annual Self-Assessment
  - Personnel policies of the agency regarding the hiring, evaluation, termination, and compensation of agency employees
  - Results from monitoring conducted under section 641A(c), including appropriate follow-up activities
  - Personnel policies and procedures, including policies and procedures regarding the hiring, evaluation, compensation, and termination of the Executive Director, Head Start Director, Director of Human Resources, Chief Fiscal Officer, and any other person in an equivalent position within the agency

### **Program Governance Key Indicator #3—Reporting to Governing Body and Policy Council**

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- ▶ Ask the governing body how often they receive the reports listed below. Document whether the governing body receives the following reports as often as required.

#### Annual reports

- The financial audit
- The Self-Assessment, including any related findings
- Program Information Report (PIR)

#### Monthly Reports

- Financial statements, including credit card expenditures (if the program uses credit cards)
- Program information summaries
- Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children whose care is partially subsidized by another public agency



- Reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)

#### Additional reports

- Every 3 years, the community-wide strategic planning and needs assessment (Community Assessment) of the Head Start agency
- Applicable and current updates from the Secretary (i.e., Program Instructions, Information Memoranda, etc.)

## Policy Council—Interview

### Program Governance Key Indicator #1—Structure and Participation

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- ▶ Ask the Policy Council to describe the composition of its membership and share relevant documentation that confirms that the Policy Council has the appropriate composition and members are elected.

Does the Policy Council membership meet the following requirements:

- At least 51 percent of the members are parents of children currently enrolled in the Head Start program (including delegate agencies)
- At least one member is from the at-large community served by the program or any delegate agency
- Members are elected by parents of children currently enrolled in the program.

Ask the program to provide the documents needed and review them with you to confirm the Policy Council's membership.

### Program Governance Key Indicator #2—Roles, Responsibilities and Training

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- ▶ Ask the program to provide you with documentation of Policy Council training, (e.g., Policy Council meeting agendas and minutes), which you will review with staff while discussing this item.

Ask the Policy Council to describe the training they received and provide examples of how the training has helped them make decisions about the Head Start program.

- ▶ Ask the Policy Council members to describe their involvement in and provide examples of decisions made in the areas listed below.

Is the Policy Council actively involved in the following?

- Activities to support the active involvement of parents in supporting program operations, including policies to ensure that the Head Start program is responsive to community and parent needs
- Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities



- Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding
- Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement related to and participation in Policy Council activities
- Developing by-laws for the operation of the Policy Council
- Program personnel policies and decisions regarding the employment of program staff consistent with 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(IX) and including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff
- Developing procedures for how members of the Policy Council of the Head Start program are elected
- Providing recommendations on the selection of delegate agencies and the service areas for such agencies
- Program design and operations
- Planning goals and objectives

### **Program Governance Key Indicator #3—Reporting to Governing Body and Policy Council**

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- ▶ Ask the Policy Council how often they receive the reports listed below. Discuss whether the reports provided to the Policy Council contain the information needed to provide effective oversight.

Document whether the Policy Council receives the following reports as often as required:

#### **Annual reports**

- The financial audit
- The Self-Assessment, including any related findings
- Program Information Report (PIR)

#### **Monthly Reports**

- Financial statements, including credit card expenditures (if the program uses credit cards)
- Program information summaries
- Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children whose care is partially subsidized by another public agency
- Reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

#### **Additional reports**

- Every 3 years, the community-wide strategic planning and needs assessment (Community Assessment) of the Head Start agency



- Applicable current updates from the Secretary (i.e., Program Instructions, Information Memoranda, etc.)

Ask the members whether the reports they received contributed useful and timely information that support the Policy Council's decision-making. If the reports are of poor quality and cannot be used by the Policy Council, capture that in your notes.

## Head Start/Early Head Start Director—Interview/Debrief

### Management Systems Key Indicator #1—Program Planning

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- ▶ How does the program:
  - Develop goals, objectives, and plans based on an analysis of program data and the results of the program's Community and Self-Assessments
  - Engage stakeholders (governing bodies, policy groups, parents, and staff) in planning
  - Use program data to design and implement changes to improve program services on an ongoing basis
- ▶ With the Director, review the program's Self-Assessment. Discuss the process the program uses to conduct the Self-Assessment, including:
  - How frequently it is conducted
  - How the program evaluates progress toward program goals
  - How improvement plans are developed

### Management Systems Key Indicator #2—Ongoing Monitoring

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- ▶ How does the program:
  - Use effective tools and procedures to ensure it is in compliance and meets its goals and objectives
  - Clearly define staff roles and responsibilities in program oversight
  - Conduct frequent, ongoing monitoring activities
  - Collect and use data for planning activities and to ensure compliance
  - Ensure ongoing monitoring of delegate agencies takes place

### Management Systems Key Indicator #3—Human Resources

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- ▶ Describe the organizational structure and the assignment of staff responsibilities and determine whether any vacancies affect the achievement of the goals and objectives of the program.



Determine how the program maintains an organizational structure that meets its goals and objectives. Are all major program functions and responsibilities assigned to staff?

If vacancies exist, ask how the program adjusts to ensure the positions' responsibilities are taken on by other staff. Determine whether services to children and families are negatively impacted by the vacancies. If so, document how long the vacancies have existed and how they impact services.

Are staff supervised and supported so that they receive the tools they need to be successful in their roles?

- ▶ Ask the Director to describe how the program informs staff about the standards of conduct. What policies and procedures does the program have in place to ensure that the standards are followed?

If there were any violations of the program's standards of conduct, talk to the Director about such violations and determine what penalties were applied.

- ▶ If any staff members did not have CRCs or were hired within the last 12 months and did not complete CRCs prior to hire, talk to the Head Start Director regarding the policies in place and determine why checks were not completed and what, if any, steps will be taken to correct the issue.

### **Management Systems Key Indicator #4—Communication**

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- ▶ How does the program:
  - Share accurate and timely information with staff to support outcomes for children and families
  - Share accurate and timely information with parents, policy groups, and the general community

### **Management Systems Key Indicator #5—Record-Keeping and Reporting**

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- ▶ With the HS Director, discuss the program's record-keeping system.
  - What data system does the program use?
  - How does the program ensure that the data are accurate and up to date?(e.g. ERSEA data, children being kept up to date)
  - In what ways does the program use their data?
  - How does the program ensure data is kept confidential?
- ▶ With the Director, review the program's Annual Report. Discuss how the Annual Report is made public. Describe the information included in the report, including:
  - An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year
  - Information on school readiness and how the grantee works to prepare children for kindergarten



## Review Team Meeting—Interview

### Management Systems Team Discussion

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#### Program Planning

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- ▶ How does the program:
  - Develop goals, objectives, and plans based on an analysis of program data and the results of the program’s Community and Self-Assessments
  - Engage stakeholders (governing bodies, policy groups, parents, and staff) in planning
  - Use program data to design and implement changes to improve program services on an ongoing basis

#### Ongoing Monitoring

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- ▶ How does the program:
  - Use effective tools and procedures to ensure it is in compliance and meets its goals and objectives
  - Clearly define staff roles and responsibilities in program oversight
  - Conduct frequent, ongoing monitoring activities
  - Collect and use data for planning activities and to ensure compliance
  - Ensure ongoing monitoring of delegate agencies takes place

#### Human Resources

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- ▶ How does the program:
  - Maintain an organizational structure that supports its goals and objectives
  - Assign all major program functions and responsibilities to staff
  - Provide adequate supervision and support to staff

#### Communication

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- ▶ How does the program:
  - Share accurate and timely information with staff to support outcomes for children and families
  - Share accurate and timely information with parents, policy groups, and the general community



## Record Keeping and Reporting

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- ▶ How does the program:
  - Keep records up-to-date
  - Consistently collect and record data
  - Generate reports to inform planning, communication, and ongoing monitoring
  - Make information accessible to appropriate parties
  - Maintain confidentiality

## Program Strengths

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- ▶ Each night as a Review Team, discuss the grantee's areas of strength. Throughout the week, the team should collect additional information on the areas of strength to inform the final documentation of a strength at the end of the week.



## Document Reviews

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### Criminal Record Checks—Document Review

#### Management Systems Key Indicator #3—Human Resources

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- ▶ Ask the Head Start Director or Human Resources Manager for a copy of the criminal record check (CRC)-tracking data that indicates the date each (CRC) was completed and the date of hire for each staff member.

Use this tracking sheet during your discussions with the Reviewers to compare the accuracy of what they saw in the files with what is seen in the tracking system.

Determine whether the program has completed CRCs and whether CRCs were completed prior to hire for the following staff: teacher aides/assistants, food preparation staff, bus monitors, and FCE staff. If you have concerns regarding the information documented in the CRC-tracking data, or if the team's staff file reviews have found a large number of staff completed CRCs late or not at all, compare a sample of the data from the tracking system with the actual staff files of the teacher aides/assistants, food preparation staff, bus monitors, and FCE staff.



## Summary

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*About the Program Governance Summary: To complete the summary, reviewers will look across the data collected within the Program Governance content area for evidence of the key elements of the systems needed to operate Head Start. For example, for Program Governance the RTL will be looking at how the Key Element, Human Resources, affects Program Governance. Assigning major functions and responsibilities related to governance would be discussed in this summary. Below are the prompts for each Key Element that reviewers will consider as they summarize the data for this area of the protocol.*

### Program Governance Summary

#### Management Systems Key Indicator #6—Strengths and Summaries

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▶ Program Planning-

Key elements of planning include:

- Developing goals, objectives, and plans based on an analysis of program data and the results of the program's Community and Self-Assessments
- Engaging stakeholders (governing bodies, policy groups, parents, and staff) in planning
- Using program data to design and implement changes to improve program services on an ongoing basis

▶ Ongoing Monitoring

Key elements of ongoing monitoring include:

- Use of effective tools and procedures to ensure the program is in compliance and meets its goals and objectives
- Clearly defining staff roles and responsibilities in program oversight
- Conducting frequent, ongoing monitoring activities
- Collecting and using data for planning activities and to ensure future compliance
- Ensuring ongoing monitoring of delegate agencies takes place

▶ Human Resources

Key elements of Human Resources include:

- Maintaining an organizational structure that supports the program's goals and objectives
- Assigning all major program functions and responsibilities to staff
- Supervising and supporting staff



► Communication

Key elements of Communication include:

- Sharing accurate and timely information with staff to support outcomes for children and families
- Sharing accurate and timely information with parents, policy groups, and the general community

► Record-Keeping and Reporting

Key elements of Record-Keeping include:

- Keeping records up to date
- Consistently collecting and recording data
- Generating reports to inform planning, communication, and ongoing monitoring
- Making information accessible to appropriate parties
- Maintaining confidentiality