

OHS Director Sanchez Fuentes Explains Competitive Process for the Designation Renewal System

Yvette Sanchez Fuentes: Hello, I'm Yvette Sanchez Fuentes, Director of the Office of Head Start. Today, the Administration for Children and Families released funding opportunity announcements for service areas that are up for competition based on the designation renewal system put forth by this administration in December 2011. I want to take a moment and talk with you about the process moving forward and what you should expect over the next several months.

We've decided to release the funding opportunity announcements in two groups. Grantees were placed into each group based on the month their program year funding begins. This will help plan possible transitions around natural breaks in services to minimize disruptions to children, families, staff, and communities. Funding opportunity announcements for the first group of service areas is available today and will be posted on Grants.gov. Funding for the second group will be available in May 2012.

Today, you will see funding opportunity announcements for approximately 100 service areas. In May, you will see funding opportunity announcements for approximately another 100 service areas. Each competition will be open for 90 days, giving all entities more time to plan for their proposal. Paneling reviews will begin in August and run through the end of the year.

My staff and I have said many times, "Our number one goal is to minimize disruption of services to children, families, and staff." With this in mind, the Department of Health and Human Services plans to extend grant funding for all grantees designated to compete until the end of the 2012-2013 school year. This ensures that children can attend the same program for the full school year. This also takes into account your concerns about the uncertainty of whether a program will operate for a full school year and potential issues of staff seeking other employment. This plan supports continuity of services for children and assures parents that when they enroll their children in Head Start programs this summer, that the program, teachers, and family support staff will remain constant for the upcoming school year.

This plan also minimizes disruptions in communities by taking advantage of natural program breaks to maintain continuity of services. This will be especially important in communities where the competition results may lead to opening Head Start programs in neighborhoods currently un-served or underserved. Beginning in August of 2012, grantee incumbents will be funded to provide services for their current program year begin date until June 30th of 2013. For example, this means that a grantee who is due for their annual refunding the first of November will receive funding for eight months to allow them to operate until the end of June; and a grantee due for refunding in December will receive seven months of funding; and so on.

The proposed plan will be advantageous for Head Start children and families, communities receiving services, organizations competing for grants or grantees setting up new programs, and federal staff administering the competitions and transitions to new grantees. The proposed plan provides an opportunity for regional offices to negotiate new awards and work with both incumbents and incoming

grantees to ensure seamless transitions for children and families.

I want to thank you for taking the time to view this short message today, and I encourage you to visit [Grants.gov](https://www.Grants.gov) for the latest information around the funding opportunity announcements. Finally, I want to thank you for the work you do each and every day on behalf of children and families across this country. Thank you.