

American Indian and Alaska Native Early Head Start Expansion Funding Opportunity Announcement

Frequently Asked Questions: Volume 3

May 10, 2017

1. We are interested in expanding the number of center-based slots in our EHS program and have the following question: If we apply, and our application is funded, will our annual funding allocation increase to cover the cost of the additional slots added through the expansion grant?

All grants rewarded as a result of the American Indian and Alaska Native Early Head Start Expansion funding opportunity announcement (FOA) will be new five year grants with a corresponding grant number. The grants made as a result of this FOA are not a supplement to existing grants even though Early Head Start services are expanded within the program.

2. We are in the process of applying for American Indian and Alaska Native Early Head Start Expansion Grant--CFDA: 93.600. Part of the grant will involve requesting funding assistance for facility needs. Our current facilities are in non-compliance due to inadequate size and quality. I have a couple of questions regarding our application for this grant.

1. Part of our grant application will address how we will seek funding to expand our organizational resources and staff capacity to provide comprehensive early childhood education and development services that comply with the new Early Head Start Performance standards. Working with the director and staff of the Early Head Start program, we will be able to address these issues.
2. Facility Needs. This is an area I am having challenges. To comply with the guidelines expressed in the New Performance standards for securing grant funding for facilities, the expectations are formidable. This grant is due June 16, 2017. The challenges I see are two-fold:
 1. We don't have enough time to accomplish the guidelines as expressed in the Performance Standards
 2. We don't have available financial resources to accomplish many of these tasks.

It states in the Performance Standards--1303.43 (pg. 72) that:

1. A grantee may submit a written request to the responsible HHS official for reasonable fees and costs necessary to determine preliminary eligibility under Section 1303.42 before it submits an application under 1303.44. If the responsible HHS official approves the grantee's application, the grantee may use federal funds to pay fees and costs.

The Preliminary Eligibility guidelines include:

1. Preliminary Eligibility

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1. Before a grantee can apply for funds to purchase, construct, or renovate a facility under 1303.44, it must establish that:
 1. The facility will be available to Indian tribes, or other low-income communities;
 2. The proposed purchase, construction or major renovation is within the grantee's designated service area; and
 3. The proposed purchase, construction or major renovation is necessary because the lack of suitable facilities in the grantee's service area will inhibit the operation of the program.
2. If a program applies to construct a facility, that the construction of such facility is more cost-effective than the purchase of available facilities or renovation.
2. Proving a lack of suitable facilities: To satisfy paragraph (a)(i)(3) of this section, the grantee must have a written statement from an independent real estate professional familiar with the commercial real estate market in the grantee's service area, that includes factors considered and supports how the real estate professional determined that there are no other suitable facilities in the area.

We develop this statement with a statement from a real estate agent to submit this request. If there anything else we need to know and do to submit this request for approval for preliminary eligibility? My understanding is that this request should be directed to you.

The application to purchase, construct and renovate facilities (1303.44--pg 73) has a lot of activities that we will not be able to accomplish and do not have the funding for by the June 16, 2017 deadline. What advice can you provide me to write and submit this application requesting funding assistance for facility needs? The facility improvements is a major need for the early Head Start program and we need funding assistance to address it. We are looking at a new facility which requires a lot of PreDesign and Design/Development activities. How can we accomplish these activities and satisfy the requirements of the grant application?

We are definitely interested in applying for this grant, but we need assistance to satisfy all the grant application requirements as they relate to securing funding for facility needs to comply with the new Performance Standards.

Per Section I. Program Description of the funding opportunity announcement (FOA), "Under this FOA, new entities or existing Head Start and EHS grantees can apply to expand the number of center-based and/or home-based slots in traditional AI/AN EHS programs through Expansion."

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Funding awarded as a result of this FOA cannot solely be used for quality improvements to an existing grant's program.

Section V.I. Criteria of the FOA includes the following criterion, "5.5. Describes plans to meet or exceed federal requirements concerning facilities and to be accessible by federal authorities for purposes of monitoring and ensuring compliance, unless federal laws prohibit such access. Where facilities are not available, the application provides a plan to acquire facilities in accordance with the requirements provided for the purchase, construction, and major renovation of facilities described in 45 CFR Part 1303.40 Subpart E."

The aforementioned criterion requires an applicant, when facilities are not available, to provide a **plan** to acquire facilities in accordance with federal regulations. If an applicant is awarded funding through this FOA and wants to acquire new facilities and/or complete major renovations to a facility, then **as a grantee** the program must comply with the requirements described in 45 CFR Part 1303.40 Subpart E. Applicants are not required to comply with any of the Head Start Program Performance Standards requirements **for the additionally proposed expansion slots** prior to the submission of the organization's application.

Questions regarding funding specifically for facility improvements and/or the expanding organizational resources and staff capacity should be sent directly to the existing grantee's Program Specialist.

3. My organization is planning to apply for a AI/AN Early Head Start grant this cycle, however we have a few specific questions about service area that are not answered anywhere online. I'm wondering if ACF offers TA hours to grant applicants like other federal agencies or if there is an individual who is appropriate to contact with pre-application questions.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) does not provide technical assistance directly to individual applicants during the competitive grant review process.

You are encouraged to review the funding opportunity announcement in its' entirety. You are also encouraged to review the information within the Grants Toolkit on the Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center website, available at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/grants>

Direct questions related to the requirements of the FOA may be submitted to the OHS Operations Center at (888) 242-0684 or OHSTech@reviewops.org. The answers to any submitted questions regarding this funding opportunity are available at: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/grants/grant-toolkit/faq.html>

4. We would like to know if we are eligible to receive an EHS Expansion grant through ACF-OHS-CH-R11-1212. Background: As a Native American Tribal Organization that operates a Head Start program it would seem that our organization would be eligible. However, the Tribe was recently

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awarded an EHS grant and is in the start-up period with direct services scheduled to begin this summer. Question: Even though the Tribe was recently awarded an EHS grant, given the significant need that exists on the reservation, is the Tribe eligible for funding under this competition? And, assuming the application is of high quality, would it receive serious consideration even though it will be just beginning services from the recently awarded grant?

The recent award of one grant does not affect an organization's eligibility to submit an application in response to the American Indian and Alaska Native Early Head Start Expansion funding opportunity announcement (FOA). Likewise, the recent award of Early Head Start funding to an applicant entity does not preclude that entity from receiving further funding. You are encouraged to review *Section V.2. Review and Selection Process, Objective Review and Results* of the FOA for additional information on the award decision-making process.