

Head Start Legislation and Regulations Related to Program Planning

Head Start Act of 2007

SEC. 642. POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF HEAD START AGENCIES. [42 U.S.C. 9837]

(c) Program Governance - Upon receiving designation as a Head Start agency, the agency shall establish and maintain a formal structure for program governance, for the oversight of quality services for Head Start children and families and for making decisions related to program design and implementation. Such structure shall include the following:

(1) GOVERNING BODY-

(E) RESPONSIBILITIES- The governing body shall—

(ii) adopt practices that assure active, independent, and informed governance of the Head Start agency, including practices consistent with subsection (d)(1), and fully participate in the development, planning, and evaluation of the Head Start programs involved;

(2) POLICY COUNCIL-

(A) IN GENERAL - Consistent with paragraph (1)(E), each Head Start agency shall have a policy council responsible for the direction of the Head Start program, including program design and operation, and long- and short-term planning goals and objectives, taking into account the annual communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment and self-assessment.

(D) RESPONSIBILITIES - The policy council shall approve and submit to the governing body decisions about each of the following activities:

(iv) Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement and participation in policy council activities.

(d) Program Governance Administration-

(2) CONDUCT OF RESPONSIBILITIES- Each Head Start agency shall ensure the sharing of accurate and regular information for use by the governing body and the policy council, about program planning, policies, and Head Start agency operations, including--

- (A) monthly financial statements, including credit card expenditures;
- (B) monthly program information summaries;
- (C) program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children whose care is partially subsidized by another public agency;
- (D) monthly reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the Department of Agriculture;
- (E) the financial audit;
- (F) the annual self-assessment, including any findings related to such assessment;
- (G) the communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment of the Head Start agency, including any applicable updates;
- (H) communication and guidance from the Secretary; and
- (I) the program information reports.

Head Start Program Performance Standards

45 CFR 1304.50 Program governance.

(d) The Policy Council or Policy Committee.

(1) Policy Councils and Policy Committees must work in partnership with key management staff and the governing body to develop, review, and approve or disapprove the following policies and procedures:

(iii) Procedures for program planning in accordance with this part and the requirements of 45 CFR 1305.3;

(iv) The program's philosophy and long- and short-range program goals and objectives (see 45 CFR 1304.51(a) and 45 CFR 1305.3 for additional requirements regarding program planning);

(viii) The annual self-assessment of the grantee or delegate agency's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal intent of its grant application, including planning or other actions that may result from the review of the annual audit and findings from the Federal monitoring review (see 45 CFR 1304.51(i)(1) for additional requirements about the annual self-assessment);

45 CFR 1304.51 Management systems and procedures.

(a) Program planning.

(1) Grantees and delegate agencies must develop and implement a systematic ongoing process of program planning that includes consultation with the program's governing body, policy groups, and with other community organizations that serve Early Head start and Head Start or other low-income families with young children. Program planning must include:

(i) An assessment of community strengths, needs and resources through completion of the Community Assessment in accordance with the requirements of 45 CFR 1305.3;

(ii) The formulation of both multi-year (long-range) program goals and short-term program and financial objectives that address the findings of the Community Assessment, are consistent with the philosophy of Early Head Start and Head Start, and reflect the findings of the program's annual self-assessment; and

(iii) The development of written plan(s) for implementing services covered by this part (e.g. Early Childhood Development and Health Services, Family and Community Partnerships and Program Design and Management).

(i) Program self-assessment and monitoring.

(1) At least once each program year, with the consultation and participation of the policy groups and, as appropriate, other community members, grantee and delegate agencies must conduct a self-assessment of their effectiveness and progress in meeting program goals and objectives and in implementing Federal regulations.

(2) Grantees must establish and implement procedures for the ongoing monitoring of their own Early Head Start and Head Start operations, as well as those of each of their delegate agencies, to ensure that these operations effectively implement Federal regulations.