

Fiscal Year 2007 PRISM Monitoring

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
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INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

TO: All Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2007 PRISM Monitoring

INFORMATION:

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, the Office of Head Start (OHS) centralized all triennial and first year on-site reviews. This centralization was a major step in enhancing and strengthening the monitoring process. The centralization brought about many changes that impacted grantees, federal staff and review team members. The OHS assumed oversight of all triennial and first year reviews, including scheduling of reviews, assigning federal team leaders (FTLs) to lead reviews outside of their home region, increasing oversight and assessments of reviewers, implementing a new web based reporting system, creating a centralized quality assurance review of all reports and issuing all triennial and first year reports. Two changes that impacted grantees directly were the issuance of monitoring reports that were based on exception reporting only and a 30 day advance notification of their review dates.

While the changes resulting from centralization of Head Start monitoring led, at times, to some disruptions, the end results of increased consistency went a long way toward making the monitoring process a better and more transparent one. In FY 07, the OHS is building on this strong foundation of quality, accountability, consistency and objectivity and implementing further enhancements that will bring about universal transparency, heightened clarity, accuracy, and assure consistency in pre-planning and on-site review activities.

FY 07 Enhancements

In Fiscal Year 2007, OHS is introducing one integrated review protocol. This integrated protocol contains a set of compliance questions that cover all program service areas and management systems. Each compliance question is directly linked to a regulation; therefore, any review activity including interviews, observations or document review relates to a clearly defined performance requirement. Requiring review teams to adhere to a uniform and defined set of compliance questions increases focus, efficiency, fairness and comprehensiveness of the scope of the review. This integrated protocol will be available on www.headstartreviews.com on October 24, 2006. The OHS has no plans to separately disseminate printed hard copies of this reviewer tool.

Beginning in FY 07, grantees will have the opportunity to inform us in advance of the review who they determine is the 'right' person with whom to discuss each area of the protocol. Often grantees have said that the team did not speak to the right person to answer the question. The OHS wants to be certain that grantees have the opportunity to assure that the information they are providing us is coming from those staff most knowledgeable about the particular issue being discussed.

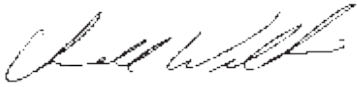
Another enhancement is that grantees will not be required to schedule their monthly Board and Policy Council meetings to occur during the on-site review. OHS acknowledges the previous expectation that such meetings be scheduled to coincide with the review week was challenging, given the 30 day notification of the review dates. While we no longer require formal Board and Policy Council meetings to be scheduled during the review week, we do expect Board and Policy Council members to be available to meet with the review team during this week.

Based on feedback from grantees, the OHS will place additional emphasis on the pre-site visit planning stage. This may require multiple planning conversations with the FTL and additional requests for pre-site visit documents. Our goal throughout FY 07 is to maximize efficiency in monitoring reviews by taking full advantage of the pre-planning stage. We expect this will result in the review team being better informed before beginning the on-site field work and will allow for more deliberate and scheduled time for interviews and observations. This, in turn, should enhance our understanding of how programs actually deliver services to children and families. We acknowledge the need for improvement in reducing the time between the conclusion of the on-site review and the issuance of a report to the grantee and we will make every effort to greatly improve in this area in FY 07.

The OHS continues its commitment to ongoing communication and grantee feedback. If you encounter any concerns while the review is ongoing, you are encouraged to notify your FTL immediately so issues can be quickly resolved. If at anytime, you want to communicate directly to the OHS please do so at OHShelp@acf.hhs.gov .

The OHS will be scheduling four informational webinars in advance of each quarter so all grantees that are being monitored in that quarter will have an opportunity to hear from OHS in advance of their review date. You will receive notification of the exact date of the webinar scheduled for your program.

Please direct any questions on this to your Regional Office.



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