

How Do Head Start Grant Recipients Use Data to Demonstrate Availability and Need for Services in Applications to Convert Enrollment Slots to Center-Based Early Head Start?

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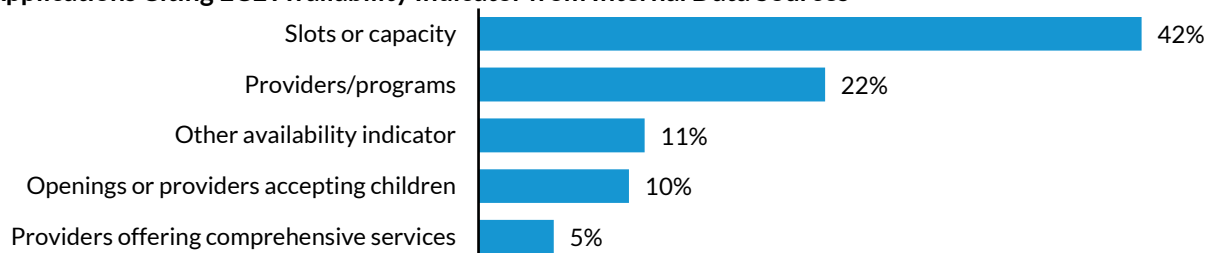
Federal guidance allows Head Start (HS) grant recipients to submit applications to convert enrollment slots from HS services for preschool-age children to Early Head Start (EHS) services for pregnant women, infants, and toddlers. Applications must include data that demonstrate a need for EHS services, show how HS-eligible children will continue to be served, and illustrate how the program will avoid displacing currently enrolled HS children. This snapshot describes the most common data sources cited in applications to convert enrollment slots to center-based EHS to demonstrate community availability of early care and education (ECE) and need for services. We use the term *availability* to refer to the prevalence and enrollment capacity of ECE programs in a particular community. We use the term *need* to refer to potential HS or EHS demand from children and families seeking or eligible for services in a particular community.

WHAT INTERNAL (ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS OR PROGRAM-COLLECTED) DATA SOURCES WERE CITED IN CONVERSION APPLICATIONS TO DEMONSTRATE COMMUNITY ECE AVAILABILITY AND NEED FOR INFANT, TODDLER, OR PRESCHOOL-AGE SERVICES?

Approximately 9 in 10 conversion applications cited data from internal administrative records or program-collected data sources. More than 40 percent of applications cited internal data points on slots or capacity to illustrate ECE availability (figure 1). Applications also cited internal data points on the number of providers and programs, openings or providers accepting children in the community, and programs offering comprehensive services from grant recipients. A portion of conversion applications cited other indicators of availability from internal data sources including data points on staffing in the program or other ECE providers.

FIGURE 1

Share of Applications Citing ECE Availability Indicator from Internal Data Sources



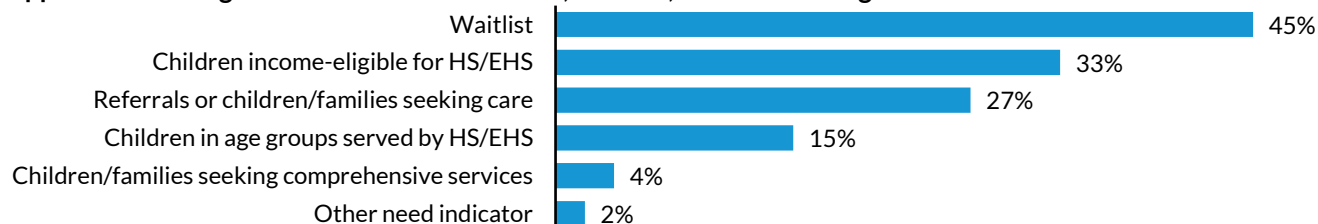
Source: Conversion applications approved in fiscal years 2020–22, downloaded from the Head Start Enterprise System.

Notes: Applications could cite multiple indicators. N = 105 applications. “Other availability indicator” includes care and education staffing and workforce as well as physical space or facilities.

Nearly half (45 percent) of applications cited waitlist data from internal data sources to demonstrate need for infant (below age 1), toddler (ages 1 to 2), or preschool-age (ages 3 to 5) services (figure 2). Applications also cited data points on children who were income-eligible for HS or EHS (33 percent) and referrals from families seeking care (27 percent) from internal data sources. Fewer conversion applications cited information from internal data sources about children in age groups served by HS and EHS, children and families seeking comprehensive services, or other need indicators.

FIGURE 2

Share of Applications Citing Indicator of Need for Infant, Toddler, or Preschool-Age Services from Internal Data Sources



Source: Conversion applications approved in fiscal years 2020–22, downloaded from the Head Start Enterprise System.

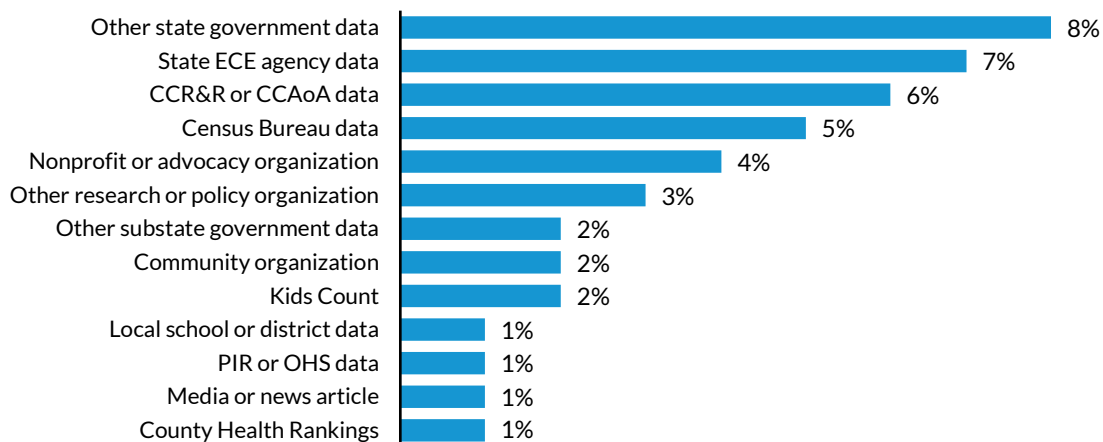
Notes: Applications could cite multiple indicators. *N* = 105 applications. HS = Head Start; EHS = Early Head Start. “Other need indicator” includes families expressing interest or a preference for Head Start or Early Head Start and children and families participating in safety net programs.

WHAT EXTERNAL DATA SOURCES WERE CITED IN CONVERSION APPLICATIONS TO DEMONSTRATE COMMUNITY ECE AVAILABILITY AND NEED FOR INFANT, TODDLER, OR PRESCHOOL-AGE SERVICES?

Grant recipients also cited data points from external sources to demonstrate ECE availability and need for infant, toddler, or preschool-age services (figure 3). The most-cited external sources on ECE availability for infants and toddlers were state sources which include licensing records. Applications also cited data points on infant and toddler ECE availability from the Census Bureau, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, and other sources.

FIGURE 3

Share of Applications Citing External Data Sources on Infant and Toddler ECE Availability



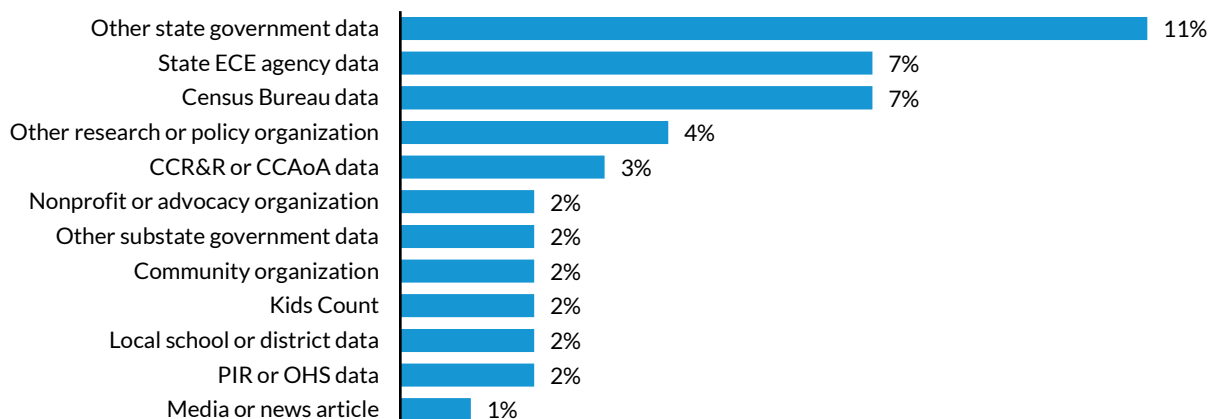
Source: Conversion applications approved in fiscal years 2020–22, downloaded from the Head Start Enterprise System.

Notes: Applications could cite multiple sources. *N* = 105 applications. ECE = early childhood education; CCR&R = Child Care Resource and Referral; CCAoA = Child Care Aware of America; PIR = Program Information Report; OHS = Office of Head Start. The “other state government” category includes state health, workforce, and economic development agencies. The “other substate government” category includes counties, cities, towns, or substate regions. The “other research or policy organization” category includes nonacademic researchers, government contractors, and think tanks.

The external sources that applications referenced for data points on ECE availability for preschool-age children were similar (figure 4). Grant recipients most often cited preschool-age ECE availability data points from state ECE agencies, other state government agencies, and the Census Bureau.

FIGURE 4

Share of Applications Citing External Data Sources on Preschool-Age ECE Availability



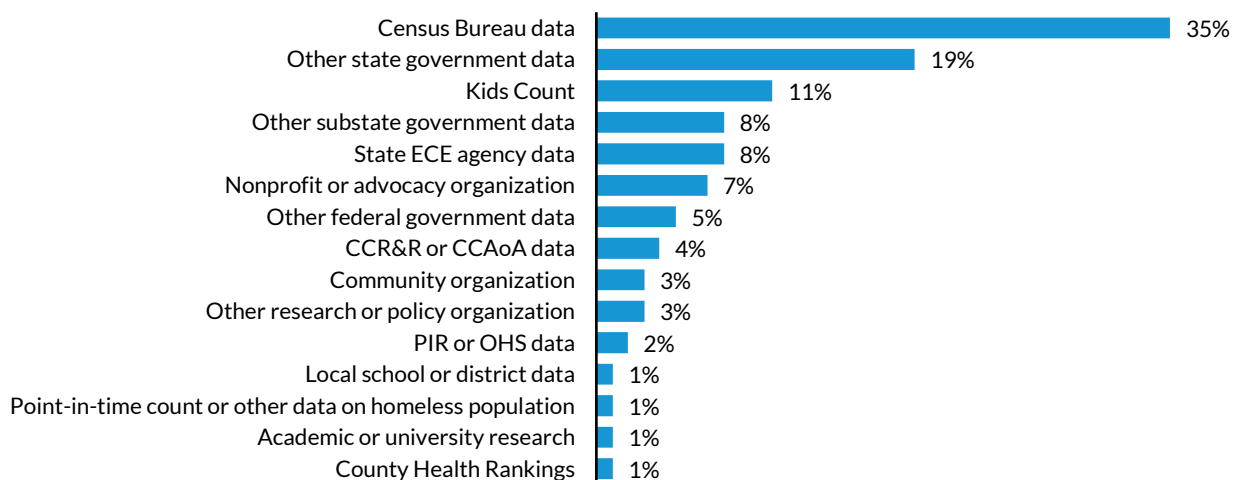
Source: Conversion applications approved in fiscal years 2020–22, downloaded from the Head Start Enterprise System.

Notes: Applications could cite multiple sources. *N* = 105 applications. ECE = early childhood education; CCR&R = Child Care Resource and Referral; CCAoA = Child Care Aware of America; PIR = Program Information Report; OHS = Office of Head Start. The “other state government” category includes state health, workforce, and economic development agencies. The “other substate government” category includes counties, cities, towns, or substate regions. The “other research or policy organization” category includes nonacademic researchers, government contractors, and think tanks.

More than one-third of applications cited data points on need for infant and toddler services from Census Bureau sources (figure 5). Other external sources used to demonstrate need for infant and toddler services included data from other federal agencies; state and local government; CCR&Rs; the Kids Count project; other research and policy organizations; and community, nonprofit, and advocacy organizations.

FIGURE 5

Share of Applications Citing External Data Sources on Need for Infant and Toddler Services



Source: Conversion applications approved in fiscal years 2020–22, downloaded from the Head Start Enterprise System.

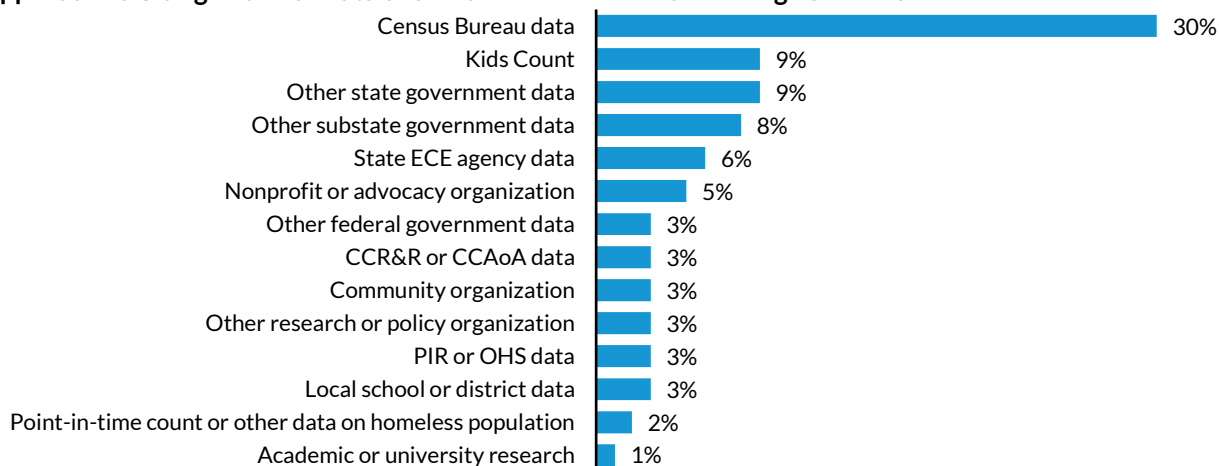
Notes: Applications could cite multiple sources. *N* = 105 applications. ECE = early childhood education; CCR&R = Child Care Resource and Referral agencies; CCAoA = Child Care Aware of America; PIR = Program Information Report; OHS = Office of Head Start. The “other federal government” category includes the Department of Labor, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services (except the Office of Head Start), and other federal agencies and entities. The “other state government” category includes state health, workforce, and economic development agencies.

The “other substate government” category includes counties, cities, towns, or substate regions. The “other research or policy organization” category includes nonacademic researchers, government contractors, and think tanks.

Similarly, grant recipients most often used Census Bureau sources when citing external data points on need for preschool-age services (figure 6). Other sources referenced by grant recipients to illustrate need for preschool-age services largely overlapped with those used to describe need for infant and toddler services.

FIGURE 6

Share of Applications Citing External Data Sources on Need for Preschool-Age Services



Source: Conversion applications approved in fiscal years 2020–22, downloaded from the Head Start Enterprise System.

Notes: Applications could cite multiple sources. *N* = 105 applications. ECE = early childhood education; CCR&R = Child Care Resource and Referral agencies; CCAoA = Child Care Aware of America; PIR = Program Information Report; OHS = Office of Head Start. The “other federal government” category includes the Department of Labor, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services (except the Office of Head Start), and other federal agencies and entities. The “other state government” category includes state health, workforce, and economic development agencies. The “other substate government” category includes counties, cities, towns, or substate regions. The “other research or policy organization” category includes nonacademic researchers, government contractors, and think tanks.

DATA, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

This snapshot is based on analysis of conversion applications to center-based EHS for fiscal years 2020 and 2021 and fiscal year 2022 applications that were approved by June. For a total of 105 conversion applications, researchers reviewed and coded information on the grant recipient, the proposed conversion, the stated rationale for conversion, and the data points and sources cited. Data sources presented in the analysis are based on those identified from reviewing, coding, and analyzing conversion applications. The share of grant recipients utilizing different external data sources may be underestimated, as grant recipients did not provide citation information for all data points included in conversion applications.

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