

Head Start and/or Early Head Start Grantee – Blaine, Hill, and Liberty Counties, Montana
HHS-2014-ACF-OHS-CH-R08-0755

The following questions have been received as of October 18, 2013. The answers have been provided by the Office of Head Start.

Question: We are applying for a birth-to-five grant. Are we allowed the flexibility to create enrollment criteria that meet the needs of the community and families we serve? Currently, according to performance standards, once a family is enrolled in EHS, they continue to be enrolled in EHS with the same income eligibility criteria; however when transitioning to Head Start they need to reapply and verify income. Several of our EHS families are no longer income eligible when their child turns 3. Are we allowed the flexibility and creativity to determine that once a family is enrolled and income eligible, they will remain enrolled throughout the entire birth-to-five program? That we will not need to have them reapply for the Head start program? This would allow us to be a birth-to five program. Are we allowed this flexibility even though it is not what is stated in Head Start performance standards?

Response: The regulation cited (1305.7) states: If one agency operates both an Early Head Start and a Head Start program, and the parents wish to enroll their child who has been enrolled in the agency's Early Head Start program, the agency must ensure, whenever possible, that the child receives Head Start services until enrolled in school. The regulations, as written supports a pre-birth to 5 approach. The grantee would still need to verify income, but could assign points to children enrolled in EHS to have a higher priority and be given preference to provide a continuum of service. In reference to being over income, grantees have the option, under the authority of the Head Start Act to enroll an additional 35% over income (up to 130% of poverty), provided all income eligible children have been enrolled first so even in the example given, the grantee could enroll over income children up to 45% (10% over income and an additional 35% through the Head Start Act.)

http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/IMs/2008/resour_ime_003_01_2208.html

Question: The Grantee Profile for Blaine, Hill and Liberty counties in Montana lists the program as serving 151 Head Start children and 60 Early Head Start children. Due to sequestration, the slots for this program have been reduced to 134 for Head Start and 54 for Early Head Start. Will we be penalized if we write the application to serve the reduced amount that was approved due to sequestration?

Response: Per the evaluation criteria as stated in the funding announcement, applicants are asked to propose enrollment levels based on the need in the community, past performance of the organization, applicant capability and other factors. The current grantee's enrollment level is provided to applicants only as a guide.

Question: We have been told we will receive funding for our current program (08CH-0034) until June 30, 2014, will that change?

Response: Grantees in Cohort 2 will be funded through June 30, 2014, as long as they remain in good standing and continue to meet the terms and conditions of their grant(s).