

General Information about Alaska Head Start Programs

Head Start programs have been operating in Alaska since 1965. There are currently 17 Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Alaska. These Head Start programs belong to one of two regions:

1. Region X (Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho)
2. Region XI, which is specifically for Native populations (12 Tribal Grantees)
 - Region XI programs can enroll up to ten percent of children who are over-income

The [Federal Administration of Children & Families](#) (ACF) is responsible for Head Start program funding. Head Start programs operate on a five-year federal grant cycle, receiving the same amount annually from ACF, with the opportunity to apply for additional funding through a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), supplemental funding requests, or Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership grants. Programs in good standing are renewed for the next five-year cycle while, other programs must reapply in a competitive process.

Note: Funded programs received additional one-time funding from the [2020 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act](#) ('Quality Funding'), the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#), and the [American Rescue Plan](#), which were distributed by ACF based on enrollment.

Federal Funding Components

When the ACF presents a Funding Opportunity Announcement, eligible entities describe:

- the proposed service area;
- the types of services (classroom or home-based); and
- the cost-breakdown for geographic differences.

Federal funding is based on what individual programs describe in their application and community needs assessment. The responsibility to clearly identify any geographic differences lies with the applicant. The needs assessment addresses several factors, including any geographic differences. It is created with input from community stakeholders and is included in the competitive grant application. Areas of the needs assessment that address geographic differences include:

1. Proposed Service Area: Geographic boundaries (size, counties, and distinguishing characteristics), governing structure, population and related trends, racial and ethnic composition, gender and ages, household composition, economic activities and future trends, median income level, principle source of income, and population below poverty level.
2. Housing & Homelessness: Overcrowding/availability, affordability, conditions, HUD housing, utilities, homeless count, mobility, and other prevalent social or economic factors.
3. Child Care Availability: Child development, childcare centers, and family childcare programs, including home visiting, publicly funded state and local preschool, approximate number of Head Start eligible children, number or percentage of working parents, typical work, school, or training schedules.
4. Transportation & Communication: Vehicle ownership, relevant aspects of road conditions, climate and weather relating to jobs, services, and isolation, availability of public transportation services, portion of population with telephones/cell phones/televisions/computers.
5. Review of Resources Available: Social services, mental health services, health, dental, and nutrition resources, and disability services.
6. Relevant Opinions of Community Needs: Parental opinions (prevalent community problems, knowledge of existing resources, accessibility of available resources, adequate service provision by existing resources, additional resources needed), opinions of community leaders/institutions (prevalent community problems, knowledge of existing resources, accessibility of available resources, adequate service provision by existing resources, suggestions for improving services, and additional resources needed), and opinions of Head Start staff (prevalent community problems, knowledge of existing

resources, accessibility of available resources, adequate service provision by existing resources, suggestions for improving services, and additional resources needed).

7. Other components of the needs assessment include: Head Start eligible children and families, nutritional needs of eligible families, education needs of eligible families, health and social service needs of eligible families, community strengths, and input from Head Start enrolled children, families, and staff.

Federal Accountability

Head Start programs are assigned a Federal Program Manager and a Training/Technical Assistance team. Programs report monthly enrollment with chronically under-enrolled programs receiving technical assistance. Programs must also conduct an annual Program Information Report (PIR). Head Start programs are subject to federal monitoring in two focus areas:

1. Off-site review: Program design, goals, governance structure, and how the program addresses the needs of the students they serve.
2. On-site review: Look for evidence of compliance to state and federal requirements.

Assessments include the use of the Pre-K Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®). This is an observation tool used to analyze and assess the effectiveness of interactions between children and teachers in center-based preschool classes.

Federal Match Requirement

There is a non-federal match requirement of the Head Start Act under [45 CFR § 75.306](#). A program must provide 20 percent of the total costs of the Head Start budget unless a waiver has been granted. Programs can meet all or part of the match through in-kind donations or through documentation of volunteer hours. If programs are not able to meet the 20 percent match requirement, they can apply to ACF to waive some or all the match requirements.

FY2021 State Head Start Equitable Funding Formula

During the 2019 Legislative Session, intent language was included in the Operating Budget directing DEED to work with Head Start and Early Head Start programs to develop an equitable and geographically weighted funding formula for disbursement of grants to these providers by January 21, 2020. Per legislative intent and a desire to work with the Alaska Head Start community, DEED staff committed considerable time and effort facilitating the creation of a new equitable funding formula.

Step 1: Legislative allotment divided by the total federal Head Start allocation = Straight percentage

Step 2: Straight percentage multiplied by the previous federal Head Start award(s) = Head Start Program State Award

In October and December 2019, DEED and the Head Start and Early Head Start programs met in-person to discuss considerations and proposals for an equitable funding formula. Through a facilitated vote and comment session, providers approved and communicated their desire to move forward with a straight percentage formula, using the base federal government allocation from the application submitted by each provider. As previously detailed, the federal government application includes a differential for geography and program type, meeting the legislative intent for consideration of geographic location. With this factored into the federal application, using a matching formula based on each program's federal funding amounts allowed Head Start and Early Head Start program representatives to create an equitable and consistent funding formula.