

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
	1. Log No. ACF-PI-HS-20-03	2. Issuance Date: 04/14/2020
	3. Originating Office: Office of Head Start	
	4. Key Words: Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act; Appropriations; Fiscal Year (FY) 2020; COVID-19	

PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO: Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies

SUBJECT: FY 2020 Supplemental Funds in Response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

INSTRUCTION:

This Program Instruction (PI) provides information about supplemental funds available for Head Start programs in response to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

On March 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 [P.L. 116-136]. This legislation includes \$750 million for programs under the Head Start Act to support preventative, preparedness, and response activities related to the coronavirus. Of this amount, up to \$500 million is available for programs to operate supplemental summer programs and about \$250 million is available for one-time activities in response to COVID-19.

Supplemental Summer Programs

As a result of the CARES Act, up to \$500 million is available for supplemental grants to existing Head Start grantees to offer supplemental summer programs.

Purpose

Many Head Start programs are closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in their communities. Closures may result in months of lost learning opportunities and comprehensive services for children and their families. These losses will be compounded for children whose Head Start programs remain closed during summer months (whether in whole or in part). Research has shown that children tend to lose academic gains during the summer months; this is particularly true for children from low-income families. To offset these losses, Head Start programs can operate supplemental summer programs for a portion of their Head Start children who would otherwise not be served over the summer. Up to \$500 million is available to fund grants for supplemental summer programs to existing Head Start grantees that can demonstrate the capacity to deliver high-quality summer learning experiences to promote school readiness and successful transitions to kindergarten.

These summer programs would primarily focus on children transitioning to kindergarten. Programs would be expected to do all of the following: provide social and emotionally supportive learning environments; consistent daily routines; support for families to bring their children up to date on needed medical, dental, and other follow-up services; and transition support for children and families to receiving schools.

Such summer programs also would afford parents and primary caregivers the opportunity to return to work, and connect to needed services and supports for mental health, parenting, and stable housing. Program staff working during the summer program would receive income and benefits, have an opportunity to work with children and families before they transition to kindergarten, and have access to professional development opportunities. Head Start programs that receive such funding should consider establishing or amending existing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with receiving schools in order to build successful transition plans that include the transmission of health and other important information.

We understand this is a fluid situation and Head Start programs may not be able to fully predict whether they will be able to open their doors in time for a summer program. We ask programs to plan for a summer program with the assumption they will be able to operate. If programs are unable to operate as intended due to health and safety concerns, we will revisit our plans and funding decisions.

It is, of course, critical that Head Start programs continue to follow local and federal guidance from health departments and other authorities when determining how to implement a summer program that maintains the health and safety of children, families, and staff. Also, even when Head Start programs are able to open, there should be an understanding that families may choose not to return for the summer due to health concerns—for example, a family in which the child is living with their grandparents or someone else that is at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19.

Summer Program Enrollment

Funding would be provided to grantees to operate a summer program that prioritizes enrollment for (1) currently enrolled children entering kindergarten at the beginning of the 2020–2021 program year and (2) currently enrolled children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). We estimate the available funding would be able to support summer programming for all of these children. Depending on the availability of funds, Head Start programs may also be able to serve other vulnerable populations that would greatly benefit from a summer program in addition to rising kindergarteners and children with IEPs.

Eligible Grantees

All Head Start programs that can demonstrate they have the capacity to deliver high-quality summer learning experiences to promote school readiness and successful transitions to kindergarten are eligible to apply. Head Start programs may not receive funds for days during the summer when they would already be fully operational. For example, Head Start programs already funded to be operational for the full calendar year for all children would not be eligible for this funding. If a program operates during the summer for a portion of its rising kindergarteners, it could apply for

funding to provide services to those rising kindergarteners and children on IEPs who would not be normally participate during the summer. No program option is excluded from this funding.

Grantees subject to competition for continued funding through the Designation Renewal System (DRS) are eligible to apply; however, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) reserves the right to delay funding decisions until the outcome of the DRS competitions has been finalized.

How to Apply

Applicants must submit all required materials, as explained below.

Once made available in late April, eligible applicants must submit a **Summer Program Supplement** in the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES). Application for these funds is voluntary.

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration

The requirements for SAM registration have temporarily changed due to the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To support entities impacted by COVID-19, applicants are not required to have an active SAM registration at the time of submission of the application. ACF encourages applicants to start their SAM registration early in the process, and the awarding agency may require documented proof of the registration submission confirmation after award.

Content of Applications

Applicants must address the following requirements in the application. The Application and Budget Justification should use 12-point font and not exceed 10 pages.

Program Schedule

Applicants must ensure the proposed summer program schedule reflects the total number of children anticipated to be served with the supplemental funding. We understand there might be some uncertainty considering the circumstances. For the center-based, family child care, and locally designed program options, the program schedule should include the number of classes, hours per day for each class, days per week, and total number of operational days that would be provided with this funding. For the home-based program option, the program schedule should identify the number of home visits, hours per home visit, number of socializations, and hours per socialization that would be provided with this funding.

Budget

Applicants will enter the budget for the summer program directly into the SF-424A. The budget should indicate funding needed to fully operate the summer program for the anticipated duration. Non-federal match is not needed for the application; see the section on Waiver of Non-Federal Match below.

Application and Budget Justification Narrative

Applicants must base their approach on prioritizing enrollment for currently enrolled children who are projected to enter kindergarten at the beginning of the 2020–2021

program year and currently enrolled children with an IEP. The budget justification should identify all costs by object class category for operations. It should identify the staff needed for summer operations, including the number of anticipated hours of staff time, taking into consideration the need to recruit staff to work in the program, oversight of operations, and the need to recruit families for participation. The budget should also consider classroom supplies, space costs, and any increased costs for health and mental health needs.

Supporting Documents

The grantee must submit a statement confirming that governing body and Policy Council members available for contact have given their approval of the Supplemental Summer Program application.

The application must be submitted on behalf of the authorizing official registered in the HSES.

All applications will be reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis. Applications are due by May 15, 2020. Applications received by this date will be reviewed and processed. If funds are still available, the Office of Head Start (OHS) may continue to accept applications until June 15, 2020 to make additional awards.

Reporting Requirements and Monitoring

Programs are required to report monthly enrollment of their summer program in the HSES. However, OHS will not consider the weeks or months in which the summer program is operational as part of the under-enrollment process. OHS will not conduct regular monitoring and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS): Pre-K® reviews of summer programs, but expects quality to be on par with normal operations. Programs are not required to submit Program Information Report (PIR) data on services provided. As always, OHS reserves the right to schedule a targeted review at any time if concerns arise.

One-Time Activities in Response to COVID-19

As a result of the CARES Act, approximately \$250 million is available for grants to Head Start grantees for one-time activities in response to COVID-19. These funds are not limited to grantees that will operate supplemental summer programs.

Purpose

Head Start programs may need to undertake a wide range of one-time, specific actions or activities in response to COVID-19. Activities could include:

1. Mental health services, supports, crisis response, and intervention services.
2. Coordination, preparedness, and response efforts with state, local, tribal, and territorial public health departments and other relevant agencies.
3. Provision of meals and snacks not reimbursed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).
4. Training and professional development for staff on infectious disease management.

5. Purchasing necessary supplies and contracted services to sanitize and clean facilities and vehicles.
6. Other actions that are necessary to maintain and resume the operation of programs, such as hiring substitute staff, investing in technology infrastructure, making improvements to air conditioning systems, or other emergency assistance.

Eligible Grantees

All Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grantees are eligible to receive funding for one-time activities in response to COVID-19.

How to Apply

For this funding, each grantee will be able to apply for a proportionate amount based on their total funded enrollment. These funds will be combined with the existing FY 2020 Cost-of-Living-Adjustment and Quality Improvement (COLA/QI) applications due on May 15, 2020. OHS will provide further guidance and instruction. Awards are expected to be processed beginning in June.

Waiver of Non-Federal Match

The COVID-19 pandemic, a national emergency, is seriously affecting economic conditions in communities throughout the nation. The Head Start Act recognizes that lack of resources in a community adversely impacted by a major disaster may prevent Head Start grantees from providing all or a portion of their required non-federal contribution. OHS has determined that the widespread impact of the COVID-19 pandemic adversely impacts all Head Start grantees. Consequently, OHS will approve all requests for waivers of non-federal match associated with the following funds for fiscal year 2020: COLA, QI, and funding associated with COVID-19. In order to request a waiver of non-federal match, place the amount of \$0 in Section C of your SF-424A in your application. No separate waiver request is required. The issuance of a notice of award constitutes approval of the requested waiver.

Additional Reporting Requirements

The CARES Act contains the following reporting requirements in Section 15011 for grantees receiving COVID-19 related funding:

Not later than 10 days after the end of each calendar quarter, any grantee that is an entity receiving more than \$150,000 total in funds under the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136), the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act (P.L. 116-123), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (P.L. 116-127), or any other Act primarily making appropriations for the Coronavirus response and related activities, shall submit to the Secretary and the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee a report. This report shall contain:

1. The total amount of funds received from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under one of the foregoing enumerated Acts
2. The amount of funds received that were expended or obligated for each project or activity
3. A detailed list of all projects or activities for which large covered funds were expended or obligated, including the:

- a. Name and description of the project or activity
 - b. Estimated number of jobs created or retained by the project or activity, where applicable
4. Detailed information on any level of sub-contracts or sub-grants awarded by the covered recipient or its sub-contractors or sub-grantees to include the data elements required to comply with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 allowing aggregate reporting on awards below \$50,000 or to individuals, as prescribed by the director of the Office of Management and Budget

"Covered recipients" are defined in Section 15011 as:

- Any entity that receives large covered funds
- Includes any state, the District of Columbia, and any territory or possession of the United States

"Large covered funds" are defined in Section 15011 as:

- Covered funds that amount to more than \$150,000

Information on how to meet these reporting requirements will be provided at a later date.

Additional Information

Additional information and materials on COVID-19, including summer programming, are available on the [Head Start COVID-19 Response](#) page on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website. This webpage will continue to be updated on an ongoing basis in the coming weeks and months.

Please direct any questions regarding this PI to your Regional Office.

Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families.

/ Dr. Deborah Bergeron /

Dr. Deborah Bergeron
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