



AGENDA REPORT


TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Sofia Navarro,
Interim Director,
Human Services
Department

SUBJECT: Early Childhood and Family Services
Annual Informational Report

DATE: November 3, 2025

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Nov 20, 2025 18:07:53 PST)

Date: 11/20/2025

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council

Receive An Informational Report Summarizing Services And General Information For The Early Childhood And Family Services Division, Including The Head Start Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Early Childhood and Family Services (ECFS) informational report is to provide a summary of the City's programming for families and caregivers, with children prenatal to five-years-old, over the past year. The report offers an update on program services provided, successes and challenges experienced, and is intended to both, inform the program's ongoing and continuous quality improvement efforts.

ECFS partners with families as leaders, to deliver equitable, trauma-informed, healing-centered, and language-accessible early childhood services so Oakland children thrive in school and life. The division serves children from prenatal to age five and their families with free, high-quality early learning and wraparound family services supports, with a focus on multilingual households, children with disabilities, and neighborhoods with the greatest need and aim to ensure children are best prepared for a successful transition to kindergarten.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The City of Oakland has been a grantee of the Head Start Program since January 1971. The City of Oakland's Early Childhood & Family Services (ECFS) Division, within the Human Services Department, operates the City's Head Start/Early Head Start grantee,

providing free early learning and family services for children birth to 5. The City Council serves as the program's Governing Body under federal Head Start governance rules, which require the Governing Body to oversee program quality, finance, and compliance.

In 2002, the City Council approved a resolution to create a Head Start Advisory Board to assist the City Council in its regular governance role for the Head Start program. The role of the Advisory Board is to provide information, advice, and recommendations to the City Council in areas that require shared action by the City Council (as the governing body of Head Start) and the Head Start Parent Policy Council. The Head Start Advisory Board participates in the planning and review of matters related to the Early Childhood and Family Services and makes recommendations to the Life Enrichment Committee of the City Council for approval. As part of ongoing communication between the Governing Body, Advisory Board, and Parent Policy Council, this report provides City Council with program updates.

The Early Childhood and Family Services division offers five service delivery models:

1. **Full-day, Center-Based preschool and infant/toddler**, operated by the City of Oakland (the Grantee)
2. **Home-Based** 0- to 5-year-old services, operated by the Grantee and Partner Agency – Brighter Beginnings, to provide Head Start education, developmental, and family services at homes and at the Home-Based centers.
3. **Family Child Care Partnership (FCC) Program** operated by the Grantee in partnership with BANANAS, Inc., Resource and Referral Agency to work with licensed family child care providers throughout the city to provide Head Start comprehensive services.
4. **Mobile Classroom Program** operated by the Grantee that offers Head Start early learning education, child development, and family services in a mobile vehicle classroom setting at family shelters and other locations where unhoused families can be served.
5. **Pregnant People and Expectant Families Program** that offers health and nutrition, in addition to pre/postnatal and early parenting classes, newborn home visits, and transition of infant to the Early Head Start Program by the Grantee and Partner Agency.

Program Governance

The Head Start program model, by federal Head Start statute, includes the implementation of shared governance practices at its foundation. In this model, the Oakland Head Start Program works with the Oakland Head Start Parent Policy Council, comprised of Policy Council Representatives, who are current and former program participants, elected by the Family Committees at each site, to serve on the program-wide Parent Policy Council to represent the voice of the Oakland Head Start program and community. Parent Policy Council representatives are elected annually and can serve up to five years on the Parent Policy Council, through site-based and Parent Policy Council elections. The program also works with

the Oakland Head Start Advisory Board, which, through a provision in the Head Start Program Performance Standards and City Resolution, serves as a liaison on behalf of the Board (Oakland City Council), is appointed by the Mayor, and is composed of local community leaders with early childhood expertise and experience. Advisory Board Members serve in three-year terms and can serve up to twelve years on the Advisory Board, through mayoral re-appointment.

The Oakland Parent Policy Council and Advisory Board are instrumental elements in the Head Start Program model, as they help the program ensure that its goals and services are responsive to and driven by community voice. The Parent Policy Council and Advisory Board meet with the Oakland Head Start program staff monthly to carry out the primary functions of their work with the program.

As such, the Program's Parent Policy Council and Advisory Board were deeply engaged in all aspects of program implementation, from the participation in the oversight, review, and monitoring of program operations, implementation, progress, budget/fiscal management and oversight and local, state, and federal funding requests during monthly public convenings.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

This policy action advances *all four* Citywide priorities—1 holistic community safety; 2) housing, economic, and cultural security; 3) vibrant, sustainable infrastructure; and responsive, 4) trustworthy government—by expanding equitable early childhood access, strengthening family economic stability, supporting small businesses, and delivering data-driven, community-centered services.

ECFS prioritizes quality and school readiness by investing in curriculum, coaching, and continuous improvement. The division advances equity and inclusion, connects families to health, mental health, nutrition, housing, and other needed services. ECFS works to strengthen the early educator workforce through recruitment, training, retention, and an apprenticeship program. ECFS stewards local, state, and federal funds, contracts with providers as partners in service delivery, and monitors outcomes and compliance. The programs partner with Oakland Unified School District, Alameda County Public Health, and community-based organizations. ECFS uses data to track results and guide evidence-based programming.

The division is awarded federal funding from the Department of Health and Human Services – Office of Head Start, and state funding contracts from the California Department of Education – California State Preschool Program and the California Department of Social Services – General Child Care and Development. The division also receives funds from City funds through a contract with First 5 Alameda County for Measure AA/Oakland Children's Initiative (OCI) and from general purpose fund allocations. In addition, the apprenticeship program receives funding through a contract with Merritt Community College and Early Care and Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS).

These contracts allow for up to 674 slots for comprehensive child and family centered early childhood programming and 18 apprentices annually per cohort. As the program receives state and local funding, alongside the federal Head Start grant, the division name of Early Childhood and Family Services, is more representative of all funding streams that broadly support what has been commonly understood and referred to as the City of Oakland Head Start Program, and allows for the implementation of all programming in alignment with the City of Oakland's values versus the Head Start funded priorities.

Although the number of caregivers and families that the ECFS division has been able to serve, has been directly impacted by the ongoing deficit in the early childhood education teacher workforce, the ECFS provided individualized wrap around services for 613 children in FY2023-2024 and 584 children in FY2024-2025 at no cost to families. More than 20% of the children qualified for services due to eligibility under the homelessness category. The division provides individual support to families to connect to health services and ensured over 97% of children had access to health insurance, a medical home and were up to date on immunizations, and 94% of children had dental examinations.

The program's attendance was 83.3 % with 202 days of preschool programming and 212 days of infant and toddler programming provided, 8-9 hours per day, between Center-based and Family Child Care program options. The City's ECFS operated kitchen located at the Veteran's Memorial Building prepared and served 74,845 hot meals and snacks in FY2023-2024 and 71,697 in FY2024-2025.

Major Accomplishments: The City of Oakland is one of the only programs in the nation with a mobile classroom, our flexible programming meets families experiencing homelessness where they're at and connects them to the full range of Head Start services, including support to find permanent housing.

The City began an Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program in partnership with Merritt Community College. The program has entered year 3 and has 13 teaching staff hired who were apprentices in the program.

The City of Oakland was one of 15 cities selected to be part of the National League of Cities – Early Learning Nation Cohort, recognizing its leadership and commitment to an equitable, family-centered early learning ecosystem. Through the cohort, Oakland collaborates with national peers to strengthen cross-sector partnerships, expand high-quality early learning, and use data to improve outcomes for children birth to five.

Early childhood education is among one of the most highly regulated public services because it serves very young children, uses public funds, and operates in licensed facilities. The City must comply with layered requirements including federal Head Start Act/Performance Standards, state child-care licensing (e.g., California Titles 22 and 5), health/fire/building codes, IDEA/ADA, civil-rights and language-access rules, all of which set standards for staff qualifications, ratios, background clearances, supervision, health and safety, medication and injury protocols, data privacy, and incident reporting.

The program underwent two major federal reviews in FY24-25 that impact ongoing funding: Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) to assess classroom teaching practices, teacher/child interactions and environments; and Focus Area Two (FA 2) which is the Office of Head Start's comprehensive services review. It is a deep dive review that looks at how the City is delivering high-quality services across education, health, family & community engagement, ERSEA, and fiscal/management systems, measured against the Head Start regulation (Head Start Program Performance Standards). This marks the first time since the introduction of the CLASS and federal review requirements that the City has successfully been reviewed and does not need to recompetete for the federal award.

CLASS Results - All City of Oakland Head Start funded classrooms were reviewed. The program scored above the competitive threshold in all domains. FA 2 Results: The program had no deficiencies – which is the category that impacts funding. In addition, the Office of Head Start monitoring report recognized the City program for the following six “Strong Practices”:

Education and Child Development

1. **Teaching Strategies and Learning Environments** – improving quality by use of data from standardized tools for learning environments, teaching, and home-visiting strategies.

2. **Qualifications, Professional Development, and Coaching** – follows up with education staff members to ensure learning is implemented.

Health

3. **Child Nutrition** – incorporating seasonal and local produce into learning experiences and consistent serving to children.

4. **Expectant Families** – intentional transition planning that includes postpartum supports and integration of services for expectant families with other services.

Program Design, Management, and Improvement

5. **Program Governance** – remove participation barriers for Policy Council and maintain community relationships aligned with community assessment.

6. **Staffing and Staff Member Supports** – collaboration to support children and career pathways.

Key Challenges: ECFS has had persistent vacancies in teaching and program administrative staff for the past four years. The City has senior staff who, since Covid have chosen to retire. The City hiring freezes have added to hiring delays. The City is not competitive in comparison to other early childhood programs, including non-profits and OUSD. There are no recruitment incentives and limited career-growth pathways for experienced staff, and the timeline from recruitment to hiring staff is an average of 3 months compared to 3 weeks to a month with competing non-profit agencies.

The program cannot sustain full enrollment due to the teaching staff challenges and has been placed in a chronic under enrollment status that can impact federal funding allocations. A change in scope application has been submitted and is awaiting federal review. ECFS is experiencing increased funding pressures. Operations have seen an increase in costs. Federal funds, while continuing, are a target. General purpose funds have been significantly reduced. State funding Cost of Living adjustments dropped from 8.22% in FY23-24 to 1.07% in FY24-25.

There is uncertainty in the federal support for early childhood. In April 2024, the Head Start Region 9 office was closed, leaving the City's carryforward and change in scope requests unapproved while new federal structures were put in place. There are new federal priorities impacting programming, adding additional strategic planning demands. Several facilities have required renovations that have impacted service to children and families, as they have required closures and reallocation to alternate sites when possible. Many of the facilities are older and require ongoing maintenance and renovation.

Priority Areas: Staffing and workforce stabilization is a key priority. The Human Services Department will continue working with City leadership and Human Resources to accelerate hiring timelines to be competitive; introduce journey level teacher specifications for career pathways; navigate hiring and retention incentives and continue to develop the apprentice pipelines.

The meeting of health and safety standards is another key priority. ECFS will ensure ongoing compliance with federal and state regulations and continued quality improvement. Environmental safety through lead testing and corrective actions, and facility maintenance and renovation projects.

There have been federal regulations and priority changes that have an impact on the program design and operations. As changes to regulations are proposed or occur, the program will continue to monitor and proactively plan for the impact on programming to families and children.

Child and family enrollment and engagement in the program is a high priority. Once approval is received, which is on hold due to the government shutdown, the program will implement change in scope planning and will maintain 6 months of full enrollment to be placed in compliance with requirements and to sustain federal funding.

Addressing the funding pressures is another priority. There has been no Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) increases to the federal grant and the COLA's have been suspended for State funding at the same time that General Purpose Funds have decreased. City and County Early Childhood Measures offer increased funding opportunities. ECFS will stabilize and expand programming with Measure AA funding and apply for Measure C emergency funding. Human Services will closely monitor blended funding to meet program priorities and look for opportunities to decrease costs and increase funding in compliance with funding requirements.

Early childhood services are essential to Oakland because they close school-readiness gaps before kindergarten, especially for multilingual families, children with disabilities, and

neighborhoods facing concentrated poverty, advancing the City's equity goals. Reliable care and family supports allow parents to work or study, strengthening household income and the local economy, while integrated health, mental-health, nutrition, and developmental screening catch issues early and reduce costly interventions later on.

Early childhood investments have consistently shown to deliver the highest long-term return on investment in the education pipeline (higher graduation and earnings, lower justice and health costs). These services also operationalize local Measure AA (OCI) by expanding access, stabilizing the workforce, and improving quality. The family child care program with reliably funded early learning seats supports small-business sustainability and growth among providers, while targeted investments in high-need neighborhoods advance equity. Finally, centers act as neighborhood hubs and talent pipelines, offering language access, navigation to housing and benefits, and living-wage career pathways for Oakland residents.

Data estimates from First 5 Alameda County show that there are roughly 8,644 infants and toddlers who are eligible for the Early Childhood and Family Services in the zip codes in which the City of Oakland Head Start currently operates.¹ 88% of infants and toddlers who are eligible for subsidized childcare cannot receive it because there are not enough slots. Last year, 4% of all eligible infants and toddlers residing in the zip codes where the City of Oakland operates were served by the Program. The City of Oakland Head Start Program operates 35% of all slots available.²

The shortage of preschool slots is less severe, but still significant. 32% of children who are eligible for subsidized preschool services cannot receive it because there are not enough slots. 5% of all eligible preschool children residing in the zip codes where the City of Oakland currently operates centers are served by the Program. As reflected in Table 1, the Program operates 7% of all total slots available.³

Table 1: ECE Slots Served by the Oakland Head Start Program

<i>Site</i>	<i>Program Option</i>	<i>2025-26 Funded Slots</i>	<i>Zip Code</i>
Preschool Services (Ages 3-5-years-old)			
85th Avenue	Head Start Center-based	16	94621
Brookfield	Head Start Center-based	32	94603
Lion Creek Crossing	Head Start Center-based	16	94621
San Antonio CDC	Head Start Center-based	24	94606
Sungate	Head Start Center-based	24	94601
Manzanita	Head Start Center-based	16	94606
Tassafaronga	CSPP/OCI Center-based	24	94621
Franklin	CSPP/OCI Center-based	16	94606

¹ https://www.first5alameda.org/files/OaklandCityProfile_2023.pdf

² https://www.first5alameda.org/files/OaklandCityProfile_2023.pdf

³ https://www.first5alameda.org/files/OaklandCityProfile_2023.pdf

Grantee Home-Based Program Mobile Classroom	Head Start Home-Based Mobile Classroom	16	Multiple Oakland Zip Codes
Grantee Home-Based Program	Head Start Home-Based Program	31	Multiple Oakland Zip Codes
Partner Bananas - FCC	Partner/ Head Start/FCC Program	33	Multiple Oakland Zip Codes
Partner Brighter Beginnings HB	Partner/ Head Start/ Home-based	20	Multiple Oakland Zip Codes
Prenatal to 3 Services (Ages prenatal – 3-years-old)			
85th Avenue	Early Head Start Center-based	18	94621
Broadway	Early Head Start Center-based	24	94612
Lion Creek Crossing	Early Head Start Center-based	8	94621
Arroyo Viejo	CCTR/OCI Center-based	12	94605
San Antonio Park	Early Head Start Center-based	18	94606
West Grand	Early Head Start Center-based	24	94607
Grantee Home-Based Program	Early Head Start Home-Based Program	74	Multiple Oakland Zip Codes
Grantee Home-Based Program Mobile Classroom	Early Head Start Home-Based Program	8	Multiple Oakland Zip Codes
Partner Bananas - FCC	Partner/ Early Head Start/FCC Program	26	Multiple Oakland Zip Codes
Partner Brighter Beginnings Home Based Program	Partner/ Head Start/Home-based program	100	Multiple Oakland Zip Codes
Partner Brighter Beginnings - Pregnant Mothers	Partner/ Head Start/Home-based program	20	Multiple Oakland Zip Codes

Cumulatively, the program served 613 children in the Program during PY 23-24 and 584 during PY 24-25. Table 2 shows the breakdown of total children enrolled at any point in the program year by program option.

Table 2: City of Oakland Early Childhood and Family Services Enrollment PY 23-24 and PY 24-25

Program Option	Funded Enrollment	PY 23-24 Cumulative Enrollment	PY 24-25 Cumulative Enrollment
Center-based	382	315	275
Home-based	233	235	232
Family Child Care	59	63	77

53% of families were enrolled in the Program through the public assistance eligibility category. The percentage of families enrolled in the Program because they have experienced homelessness increased to 20% compared to 17% the previous year.

As defined by the federal Head Start Program Performance Standards, children are categorically eligible for the Head Start Program if they are:

1. Children in families enrolled in a Public Assistance Program (CalFresh, CalWORKs, SSI, or TANF)
2. Children experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney Vento Act
3. Children in foster care
4. Children in families with incomes under the Federal Poverty Level

In PY 23-24, almost 16% of families served by the Program were eligible for Head Start because their income was at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), which equated to making \$31,200 for a family of four in 2024. A majority of program participants are eligible for Head Start through receiving Public Assistance (including SNAP/CalFresh, CalWORKs, SSI, or TANF).

One of the advantages of enrolling families under this category is that it does not require the family to submit as much documentation to verify their eligibility, expediting the application and enrollment process. The total percentage of participants eligible for Head Start through experiencing homelessness increased 20.5% from in PY 23-24 to 23.2% in PY 24-25. **Table 3** shows a breakdown by eligibility.

Table 3: Enrollment by Eligibility Type for Program Participants PY 23-24 and PY 24-25

Eligibility Type	PY 23-24	PY 24-25
Receiving Public Assistance (TANF, SNAP, SSI)	52.3%	54.2%
Other Eligibility (over-income)	4.3%	6.2%
Income 100-130%	3.6%	2.7%
Income at/below 100% Federal Poverty Line	15.9%	11.5%
Homeless	20.5%	23.2%
Foster Care	3.3%	2.2%

328 of the 505 families, representing 65% of total families served, were led by single parents. 312 families (61.7%) were led by a single female primary caregiver.

The Early Childhood and Family Services Division covers the entire city of Oakland and serves a racially and ethnically diverse population of children and families, as reflected in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Racial/Ethnic Demographics of Program Participants PY 2024-25

<i>Racial / Ethnic Demographics</i>	<i>PY 24-25</i>
American Indian or Alaska Native	-
Asian	18.5%
Black or African American	25.6%
Hispanic or Latinx	46.6%
Multiracial or Biracial	3.1%

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.4%
Other	0.2%
Unspecified	1.2%
White	4.2%

The primary languages spoken by Program participants were Cantonese, English, Mam, and Spanish, as reflected in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Program Primary Languages Spoken by Program Participants in PY 2024-25

<i>Language</i>	<i>PY 24-25</i>
Arabic	2.1%
Cantonese or Mandarin	12.2%
English	38.4%
Mam	6.5%
Other (most common languages included Farsi, Ibo, American Sign Language, Tigrinya, and Yoruba)	4.3%
Spanish	35.7%
Vietnamese	1%
Unspecified	0.4%

School Readiness and Education Services

ECFS delivers high-quality, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction so children from birth to 5 build the skills to thrive in kindergarten and beyond. Classrooms use a research-based curriculum with individualized lesson plans informed by ongoing assessment (e.g., DRDP), rich teacher–child interactions aligned to CLASS, and inclusive practices so children with disabilities learn in the least restrictive environment. Teachers receive coaching cycles, reflective supervision, and curriculum fidelity supports; learning is differentiated through small-group work, home language supports for dual language learners, and play-based experiences across early literacy, math, approaches to learning, social-emotional development, and physical well-being. Families are partners through goal setting, home visits, conferences, and kindergarten-transition activities (records transfer, school introductions, summer bridge). Continuous quality improvement ties classroom observations and child-level data to coaching and professional development, ensuring equity for priority ZIP codes, multilingual families, and children with IFSPs/IEPs.

Mental Health and Disability Services

ECFS delivers inclusive, trauma-informed mental health and disability services so children from birth to 5 learn in the least restrictive environment, and families are supported. We screen universally (developmental, behavioral, vision/hearing), provide early intervention through Part C (IFSP) and LEA/Part B (IEP) coordination, and embed accommodations and specialized services in classrooms and home-based visits. Mental-health consultants conduct observations,

coach teachers on social-emotional supports (e.g., Pyramid Model), offer brief family counseling and crisis response, and connect families to community providers. We uphold non-exclusionary practices (no expulsion; suspension only as last resort), offer reflective supervision for staff, and provide multilingual navigation so families understand rights and services. Ongoing monitoring tracks screening completion, referral timeliness, service uptake, progress on IFSP/IEP goals, classroom climate, and reductions in removals, driving continuous improvement and equitable access to supports.

The Program contracted with two local agencies, Through the Looking Glass and Lincoln Families, to provide Mental Health and developmental consultation. Over the 2024 summer months, the Program again partnered with Through the Looking Glass to host Developmental Playgroups at Brookfield and Lion Creek Crossing. The playgroups promoted social-emotional wellbeing and the development of self-regulation through play and environmental exploration.

Physical Health and Nutrition Services

The Program supports families with navigating the health system to ensure children are receiving high-quality physical health, oral health, and mental health services that enhance and support their children's growth, development, and school readiness.

The City's Nutrition Program provides two nutritious, culturally inclusive meals and two snacks to all children enrolled in our program. In addition to serving meals at the centers, food experience activities in the classroom are meant to extend the classroom curriculum and follow the Head Start nutritional guidelines.

The Nutrition Program also partnered with the Alameda County Food Bank to organize a monthly produce and dry food distribution for families enrolled in the Home-Based program and center-based families, as requested. In collaboration with the UC Berkeley Graduate Program in Nutritional Sciences & Dietetics, the Program hosted its first student intern in 2024, who assisted with menu development and led activities for children. The Program followed suit in 2025; and engaged student interns in Community Nutrition (four weeks) and in Food Service (seven weeks). The Program partnered with the Alameda County Food Bank and Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program for nutrition and health education for families and staff. Topics included: Understanding Nutrition Labels, Smart Shopping at the Grocery Store, and the Rethink Your Drink campaign.

Family Services and Community Engagement Services

ECFS delivers comprehensive, culturally and linguistically responsive supports that strengthen family well-being and children's school readiness. Family Advocates partner with caregivers on individualized goals (housing, food security, employment/education, mental health), provide benefits navigation and warm hand-offs, and coordinate screenings and referrals (health, dental, vision, developmental/behavioral). We elevate parent voice through Policy Council and site leadership, and offer workshops (ESL, parenting, financial coaching, kindergarten transition) with targeted father/guardian engagement. Community engagement is anchored in partnerships—with OUSD, First 5 Alameda, Public Health, WIC, libraries, clinics, and CBOs—

and outreach in high-need ZIP codes using multilingual materials and trusted messengers. Together, these services increase family stability, improve attendance and learning conditions, and build neighborhood networks that support children from birth to kindergarten and beyond.

Budget and Spending Summary

The Early Childhood and Family Services Division budget is primarily funded through the Administration for Child and Families Office of Head Start, the Oakland Children's Initiative, the California Department of Education, and the California Department of Social Service and General Purpose Funds. Table 6 provides a budget and spending summary by funding source (federal, state, and local) for PYs 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Table 6: Budget and Spending Summary – PYs 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Funding	FY23-24			FY24-25		
	Budget	%Budget	Actuals	Budget	%Budget	Actuals
Head Start Federal	\$ 5,711,656.00	18.40%	\$4,650,547.79	\$5,779,655.00	19.34%	\$4,760,885.85
Early Head Start - Federal	\$7,587,274.00	24.45%	\$5,348,222.21	\$7,587,246.00	25.39%	\$7,296,794.54
Training and Technical Assistance - Federal	\$185,423.00	0.60%	\$185,423.00	\$185,450.00	0.62%	\$185,450.00
City of Oakland General Purpose Fund	\$3,954,670.40	12.74%	\$2,285,302.50	\$2,647,554.00	8.86%	\$2,176,143.59
California Department of Education State Preschool Program	\$3,364,765.00	10.84%	\$3,364,765.00	\$3,364,756.78	11.26%	\$3,364,756.78
CA Pre-Kindergarten Family Literacy Support	\$32,500.00	0.10%	\$32,500.00	\$32,500.00	0.11%	\$32,500.00
California Department of Social Services – Child and Adult Food Program	\$252,712.28	0.81%	\$220,845.18	\$260,000.00	0.87%	\$125,184.79
CCTR – General Child	\$3,345,812.00	10.78%	\$3,345,812.00	\$3,345,813.00	11.20%	\$2,917,365.47

Care and Development Expansion						
ECEPTS	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$74,898.00	0.25%	\$28,101.79
Oakland Children's Initiative	\$6,600,000.00	21.27%	\$2,679,095.87	\$6,600,000.00	22.09%	\$3,242,801.22
Total	\$31,034,812.68		\$22,112,513.55	\$29,877,872.78		\$24,129,984.03

The Program has diverse funding streams that have enabled continuity of program operations despite budget cuts and changes at the federal, state, and local level. The City of Oakland Early Childhood and Family Services division will utilize the same funding streams in the coming fiscal year as in PY 2025-2026.

Human Resource – Early Childhood Education Workforce

In PY 2024-25, the Program in response to critical staffing challenges, and new federal requirements mandating competitive wages by August 1, 2031 (ACF, Office of Head Start Final Rule on *Supporting the Head Start Workforce and Consistent Quality Programming*, August 21, 2024 – ACF-OHS-PI-24-05 - <https://headstart.gov/policy/pi/acf-ohs-pi-24-05>), with the direction of the City Human Resource Department, contracted with a consulting group, *Usher Forward (T. Usher)*, to conduct a wage and compensation study (Attachment: Total Compensation Study Report - August 30, 2024) for key early childhood educator positions.

The updated Performance Standards also require programs to pay all staff a wage sufficient to cover basic costs of living and to ensure wages are comparable across Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start programs (<https://headstart.gov/policy/pi/acf-ohs-pi-24-05>).

Key Findings

- **Salary Gaps:** On average, Oakland Head Start salaries are **13.54% below** market rates across surveyed positions.
 - o Head Start Instructor: **-19.7%**
 - o Early Head Start Instructor: **-20.7%**
 - o Early Childhood Center Director: **-7.2%**
 - o Family Advocate: **-5.7%**
 - o Head Start Coach: **-15.0%**
 - o Associate Instructor: **-14.5%**
 - o Assistant Instructor: **-12.1%**
- **OUSD Comparison:** Preschool teachers at OUSD earn **50–71% more** than comparable Oakland Head Start instructors and directors, highlighting significant parity challenges.
- **Benefits Data:** While base salaries show clear gaps, benefits data were inconsistent across agencies, limiting a full comparison of total compensation.

- **Recruitment & Retention Risks:** Compensation lags hinder the City's ability to attract and retain qualified educators, directly affecting program stability and enrollment.

FISCAL IMPACT

As presented and reflected in **Table 6**, previously, the actual budget versus actual expenditures illustrate how the program has managed its budget in FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 amidst the changing economic priorities across federal, state, local, and philanthropic funding streams, that provide essential, comprehensive early care, education, and family services to Oakland's most vulnerable children and families.

In FY23-24, the Early Childhood and Family Services General Purpose Fund was reduced by \$50,494.44 from \$4,005,164.84 to \$3,954,670.40. A reduction of 1.26%. In FY24-25 General Purpose Fund was reduced by 1,307,116.40 from \$3,954,670.40 to \$2,647,554.00. A reduction of 49.37%.

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and Quality Improvement (QI)

The Program received Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and Quality Improvement (QI) funding in FY 23-24 and a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Only funding in FY 24-25, as reflected in Table 7. Cost of Living Adjustments from the State Departments of Education and Social Services have been suspended and the Program has received no announcement of a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA), or Quality Improvement (QI) increase has been received for FY 25-26. All COLA increases were shared with program partners providing direct services, as required.

Table 7: Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) and Quality Improvement (QI) Funding Received FY 23-24 to FY 25-26

Office of Head Start (OHS)	FY 23-24		FY 24-25		FY 25-26	
COLA/QI Funding	Early Head Start	Head Start	Early Head Start	Head Start	Early Head Start	Head Start
COLA funding	\$394,975	\$298,508			No COLA announced	No COLA announced
QI funding	\$82,642	\$139,148			No COLA announced	No COLA announced
COLA Only funding			\$178,300	\$134,224	No COLA announced	No COLA announced
State Department of Education & Social Services	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

Grounded in Head Start's shared-governance model, the program works with an elected Parent Policy Council and a Mayor-appointed Advisory Board of community leaders (child policy, pediatrics, early childhood mental health, family engagement, and parent advocacy). These bodies meet monthly to review enrollment, program content, and budgets; approve funding applications; and provide feedback that guides implementation and continuous quality improvement. Approval to submit this report was granted by both the Parent Policy Council and the Advisory Board, which conduct their meetings publicly.

COORDINATION

The Office of the City Attorney and the Budget Bureau were consulted in preparation of this report.

PAST PERFORMANCE, EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Program is required to complete an annual Program Information Report, per federal Head Start grant requirements, and a Program Self-Evaluation, per CSPP and CCTR contract terms and requirements.

The Program assesses children's developmental outcomes two times per program year using the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). The DRDP measures children's progress towards the California Early Learning Foundations and children are assessed in both Fall and the Spring to see if they progressed along the DRDP continuum. Most children made developmental progress and moved up the developmental continuum; on average, children progressed in at least 70% of measures.

In October – December, PY 2024-25, year 4 of the new grant, the program had a CLASS Observation Monitoring Review and passed the review. All City of Oakland Head Start funded classrooms were reviewed. The program scored well above the competitive threshold in all domains, which include emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support.

In March of PY 2024-25, year 4 of the new grant, the program had a Focus Area 2 (FA2) Federal Monitoring Review and passed the review without any findings. The successful Federal Review reflects the program's transformation over the past several years. Since this federal monitoring system was initiated in 2016, this marks the first time the program has passed without a deficiency and does not need to recompet for the federal award.

These monitoring review findings show that the program provides data-driven, comprehensive early childhood education and health services and has a commitment to continuous quality improvement from direct service provision for whole child-whole family supports to high-level governance and community collaboration.

As a result of these federal program monitoring review outcomes, the City of Oakland Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start program received notice from the Office of Head Start that

it is eligible to submit a non-competitive five-year continuation application, to continue to operate the City of Oakland Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start program, for the coming five-year grant cycle, FY 26-31.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Early childhood programming opens up various economic opportunities, such as enhancing parent workforce participation and supporting the growth of small businesses like family child care centers. It also creates demand for apprenticeships and capital projects, boosts the food economy through meal programs, and offers mental health services. Other areas include transportation, data and technology innovation, employer partnerships, and workforce incentives. Additionally, programs help establish parent-to-professional career ladders and activation of community spaces.

Environmental: The program uses recyclable paper products and staff plan daily activities to make the most of outdoor spaces and connect children with nature. Some of the recent green and sustainable solutions include the purchase and use of compostable bags, reusable containers in the meal program, as well as reusable containers for food transportation and reusable bowls for meal service at the centers.

Race & Equity: The program delivers individualized services that are responsive and appropriate to each child's racial, ethnic, developmental, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds and assets. Program staff, the majority of whom identify as Black, Hispanic/Latino, Multi-racial, and/or Asian, and are bilingual/multilingual aim to learn about and value participants lived experiences. Prioritizing wrap-around, systemic supports for children with the highest needs, the Program connects participants with relevant resources in their communities tailored to their specific circumstances. Through strength-based, trauma-informed approaches, program staff build meaningful, trusting partnerships with families in pursuit of shared educational and family goals.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council

Receive An Informational Report Summarizing Services And General Information For The Early Childhood And Family Services Division, Including The Head Start Program.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Diveena Cooppan, Manager, Early Childhood and Family Services, Human Services Department at (510) 238-3165.

Respectfully submitted,

Sofia Navarro

[Sofia Navarro \(Nov 19, 2025 14:49:24 PST\)](#)

Sofia Navarro,
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Contracts; Early Childhood & Family Services
Division, Human Services Department

Attachments (1):

A: City of Oakland Head Start Final Total Compensation Study Report August 30, 2024. *Usher Forward* (T. Usher)