



AGENDA REPORT

TO: Edward D. Reiskin
City Administrator

FROM: Sara Bedford
Director, Human Services

SUBJECT: Oakland Head Start/Early Head Start
Program Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 - 2026
Grant Application

DATE: October 20, 2020

City Administrator Approval

Date: October 28, 2020

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Authorizing The City Administrator To Apply For Funding, Through The Funding Opportunity Announcement Hhs-2021-Acf-Ohs-Ch-R09-1860 For Head Start/Early Head Start Grantee City Of Oakland, In An Estimated Amount Of \$17,826,886 Per Year For A Five-Year Period From Fiscal Year (FY) 21/22 Through FY 25/26 From The United States Department Of Health And Human Services, Administration For Children And Families, Office Of Head Start.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Oakland Human Services Department, Head Start Program requests authority to apply for a grant of \$17,826,866 to serve approximately 800-1,000 pregnant women and low-income children, ages 0-5, and their families throughout the City of Oakland. The proposed range of slots for participants is currently in the process of being confirmed, as the program is exploring new partnerships with several private and public organizations throughout the City to serve the specific equity and community needs identified through the assessment process. Overall, the proposal will continue to provide full-day center-based program options, as well as the home-based program option. The proposal will keep its existing locations and is currently working with partners to identify additional sites in under-served communities particularly in East Oakland. All models currently under review increase the number of infant/toddler slots provided where unmet demand for services is highest. These proposed changes align with the increased investment by the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and State of California in services provided to preschool-age children through transitional kindergarten.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

The City of Oakland has been a Grantee of the Head Start Program since January 1971. In 2007, Congress enacted legislation that required, for the first time in the program's history, greater competition within communities for Head Start funding. The goal of the legislation and

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the subsequent regulations, which were effective on December 9, 2011, is to ensure that Federal Head Start funding is directed to the organizations most capable of delivering high-quality early education that puts children on a pathway to improved outcomes, school success, and opportunity.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17, the beginning of a new 5-year project cycle (FY 2016-21), new program design changes were implemented. The new design helped the City of Oakland create a streamlined and seamless system of early care and education service delivery for vulnerable children, ages prenatal through five, and their families, living in Oakland.

The City of Oakland Head Start program was determined to be ineligible for automatic renewal of its Head Start and Early Head Start contract for FY 2021-26 and must compete for its grant under the Designation Renewal System (DRS). All conditions triggering the need for re-competition have been corrected and a re-review of the program by the Federal Administration for Children and Families in September 2020 reported all areas to be corrected and fully compliant. For more information about conditions under the DRS please refer to the supplemental report provided at the January 28, 2020 Life Enrichment Committee meeting.

The Federal Office of Head Start (OHS) offers the City the opportunity to apply for funding to serve children from birth to age five and pregnant women in one application. This provides the opportunity to create a high-quality early childhood education and comprehensive services program with a particular emphasis on the transition from Early Head Start to Head Start or to another high-quality early education program.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to bring new and innovative evidence-based or evidence-informed ideas to maximize the extent to which Early Head Start and Head Start, in collaboration with other partners and early childhood education providers, can prepare children and their families for school. Applicants are urged to explore synergies and partnerships with existing early childhood programs.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

The City's Head Start program provides comprehensive early education services to low-income children and families, to help ensure children starting school are ready to succeed. Positive learning environments help guide social and emotional development. Oakland Head Start also supports families with their child's physical health and development, approaches toward learning, communication, language, literacy, and cognition. Head Start and Early Head Start teachers are required to have Bachelor and Associate degrees with specific training in early child development and infant/toddler coursework. The program also provides teaching staff with ongoing professional development in the use of research-based curriculum, lesson planning and child assessments and screenings.

The Oakland Head Start/Early Head Start program is evidence-based, data driven, and designed to provide high-quality comprehensive services that include education, health, nutrition, disabilities, and family support. The program model also includes parent leadership

and advocacy with the Parent Policy Council having decision-making authority over program models and implementation. Family goals both related to economic well-being and education are a critical component of the partnership agreement with all families.

The needs of families served by the City of Oakland Head Start program are varied, based on the specific communities in which they live. The overall poverty rate of the city, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, has remained higher than the state of California's (18 percent compared to 12 percent). In addition, more than 40 percent of families speak a language other than English at home, indicating a large number of families that may be linguistically isolated. Other significant issues faced by families that the proposed program will address through its use of varied locally designed, parent-driven options include but are not limited to:

- Racial and geographic inequity resulting from systemic failures.
- Housing insecurity and homelessness.
- Linguistic isolation.
- The effects of trauma on children and families.
- Food insecurity.

Program Services in FY 2021-26

Center-based Program Services Option: In FY 2021-26, the Oakland Head Start/Early Head Start program proposes to operate the following program options:

- a) Full-day, center-based Head Start and Early Head Start services, operated by the City of Oakland, the Grantee and Partners,
- b) Home-Based Early Head Start and Head Start services offered by the Grantee Partner Agency
- c) Pregnant Women's program that offers health and nutrition, in addition to early parenting classes, newborn home visits and transition of infant to the Early Head Start Program.

Focus will be in providing families with a clear Head Start path for children, starting in pregnancy and extending up until kindergarten. Seamless transitions for children both within the Head Start program and into other educational systems are a critical element of family support and critical to the goal of school readiness and parent engagement.

Building on Community Resilience to Address Needs

Housing insecurity and homelessness requires unique and expanded service models to address the rising challenges for families in the community. The City's application for the Health and Human Services grant will expand options available to families struggling with housing insecurity and in close collaboration with the Human Services Department's Community Housing Division, building on existing infrastructure to serve the most vulnerable families.

Similarly, COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Head Start families who are more likely to be or have a family member who is an essential worker, live in crowded conditions, and/or to have been impacted economically by reduced hours or job loss. The application will expand on

the family support in the areas of job skills and income growth through the support of career ladders and well as continuing its work on basic needs including food security and health, including mental health supports.

The Head Start program will also continue its support of families and teachers in ensuring trauma-informed practices are infused and supported both in the program's curriculum and in its training opportunities for both families and teaching staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

The successful award to The City of Oakland by the Office of Head Start may be up to \$17,826,886 to provide 800-1,000 children and families with comprehensive early childhood services.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

As per the requirements of the Office of Head Start, the application submission was approved by The City of Oakland Head Start Policy Council, comprised of current and former Head Start parents on October 13, 2020, as well as the Head Start Advisory Board, on October 15, 2020.

COORDINATION

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

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: The Head Start and Early Head Start program employs 147 people in a full-time and part-time capacity. In addition, Head Start and Early Head Start strives to support local businesses, purchasing most of its goods and services from Oakland vendors. To provide parents with time during the day, the full-day, early education program, enables parents to seek (and maintain) employment opportunities, and/or continue educational goals. The program has also developed internal employment training for parents interested in the early childhood education field.

Environmental: The program is committed to reducing landfill waste, and has organic compost and recycling bins at each Grantee site. The use of compostable bowls, plates and utensils are utilized during all meals, Grantee and refillable water stations have been introduced at sites. The program is working toward food service that is more organic and locally sourced whenever possible.

Race & Equity: The Head Start program is designed to support families whose children have historically been failed by educational and safety net services and victimized by structural racism. In part, the goal is to assure the kindergarten readiness of children, particularly African American boys who have historically been poorly served by this system. The goal is achieved not simply through responsive educational practices but through the development of family advocacy skills to help parents address the on-going systemic challenges their children will face under the current system.

New continuous quality improvement frameworks for data collection will allow the program to disaggregate data by race and have better knowledge of its success in supporting specific populations. Rigorous data analysis is critical element to informing the central question of “are families and children better off. “

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Adopt A Resolution:

Authorizing The City Administrator To Apply For Funding, Through The Funding Opportunity Announcement Hhs-2021-Acf-Ohs-Ch-R09-1860 For Head Start/Early Head Start Grantee City Of Oakland, In An Estimated Amount Of \$17,826,886 Per Year For A Five-Year Period From Fiscal Year (FY) 21/22 Through FY 25/26 From The United States Department Of Health And Human Services, Administration For Children And Families, Office Of Head Start.

For questions regarding this report, please contact DIVEENA COOPPAN, Health and Human Services Manager, Head Start Program Director (510) 238-7186.

Respectfully submitted,



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