

**ADDENDUM TO  
THE WEBB COUNTY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL  
TO INCLUDE**

**PERSONNEL POLICIES FOR THE HEAD START PROGRAM STAFF**

**PURSUANT TO THE FINAL RULE OF  
HEAD START PROGRAM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS  
PROMULGATED UNDER  
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (ACF) AND  
ADMINISTRATION ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES (ACYF)  
*45 CFR Parts 1301 et al.***

**HONORABLE WEBB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT AND  
HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

**TANO TIJERINA, COUNTY JUDGE  
FRANK SCIARAFFA, COMMISSIONER PRECINT I  
ROSAURA TIJERINA, COMMISSIOER PRECINT II  
JOHN GALO, COMMISSIONER PRECINT III  
JAIME CANALES, COMMISSIONER PRECINT IV**

**WEBB COUNTY, TEXAS  
1000 HOUSTON  
LAREDO, TEXAS 78040**

## INTRODUCTION

Head Start / Early Head Start (EHS) is a comprehensive child development program for children birth to five years of age from eligible low-income families. The Webb County Head Start program is designed as a center-based / Home Base (EHS) model which provides each child with a developmentally appropriate learning environment and varied experiences which will help to develop each child socially, intellectually, physically, and emotionally. In addition to providing educational services to children and their parents, Webb County Head Start also provides health, dental and nutritional services, social services, mental health services, services for children with disabilities, family and community strengthening, and opportunities for parent involvement.

Therefore, Webb County, acting through the Commissioners Court, which serves as the governing body for the Head Start Program, has established, approved, and implemented, written personnel policies for staff of the Head Start Program, pursuant to the rules and regulations promulgated under 45 CFR Part 1301, Section 1301.31(a), and 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(x), as authorized by 42 U.S.C. 9801 et seq., in order to continue to ensure that Head Start is a high quality program for the children and families that are served.

The policies in this addendum are applicable to, and are made available to, all Head Start / Early Head Start Program staff in written form and through staff trainings.

The policies in this addendum are to be enforced where applicable in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and Local laws. Violations of these written policies may subject the violator to disciplinary action, including termination. Any subsequent changes to these policies must be approved or disapproved by the Policy Council.

SIGNED ON THIS THE 9th DAY OF November, 2015

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WEBB COUNTY JUDGE

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POLICY COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

The Webb County Head Start / Early Head Start Program is an equal opportunity employer. The Program shall not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, gender, marital status, physical or mental disability, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(6)*

### **STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

#### **A. Head Start Executive Director Qualifications**

The Head Start Executive Director must demonstrate skills and abilities in a management capacity relevant to human services program management.

Responsible areas include:

1. communication, including, but not limited to, interaction with the Webb County Commissioners Court, Webb County Department Heads, program staff, the Policy Council, and Head Start Families;
2. program planning; day-to-day program management and operations, including personnel administration and supervision;
3. staff development and training, coaching, and mentoring;
4. maintenance of facilities, materials, and equipment;
5. fiscal administration;
6. assessment of program staff and operations; and
7. community relations and program advocacy.

#### **B. Qualifications of Content Area Coordinators and Consultants**

All content area services shall be coordinated by staff and supported by consultants with the following education, training, skill, and/or experience:

1. Education and Child Development
  - a. Early childhood educational practices
  - b. Theories and principles of child growth and development.
  - c. Family Systems

- d. Meet qualifications for classroom teachers as specified in section 648A of the Head Start Act and any subsequent amendments regarding the qualifications of teachers.
2. Health Services
    - a. Nursing
    - b. Public Health
    - c. Health education
    - d. Health administration
    - e. Maternal and child health
    - f. Licensed/certified health professional, as applicable
  3. Nutrition Services
    - a. Nutrition education
    - b. Registered Dietitian
  4. Mental Health/Disability Services
    - a. Social Work
    - b. Mental Health
    - c. Family Systems
    - d. Child Advocacy
    - e. Family Advocacy
    - f. Family Systems
    - g. Social and Human Services
    - h. Licensed/certified professional related to disability, as applicable
  5. Family and Community Partnership Services
    - a. Social Work
    - b. Human Service
    - c. Family Systems
    - d. Licensed/certified social service professional, as applicable
  6. Parent Involvement Services
    - a. Child Advocacy
    - b. Family Advocacy
    - c. Family Systems
    - d. Social and Human Services
  7. Fiscal Services
    - a. Business education
    - b. Accounting
    - c. Licensed/certified fiscal professional, as applicable

### C. Staffing Pattern

Head Start / Early Head Start Executive Director  
Assistant Head Start Director II and I  
Head Start Accounts Payable Manager  
Administrative Secretary  
Records Manager  
Office Clerk  
Accounting Clerk  
Computer Specialist  
Education Director  
Education Assistants  
Family and Community Partnerships Coordinator  
Family Service Workers  
Health and Safety Director  
Licensed Vocational Nurse  
Health Assistants  
Parent Involvement Coordinator  
Parent Involvement Assistant  
Disability Coordinator  
Mental Health Coordinator  
Specialized Services Assistants  
Nutrition Coordinator  
Nutrition Assistant  
CACFP Clerk  
Head Cooks  
Cooks  
Kitchen Aides  
Area Service Managers  
Mentor Head Teacher  
Teacher/BA and AA  
Teacher Assistant/AA and CDA  
Teacher Assistant  
Classroom Aides  
Substitute Teacher 29 HR/WK  
Disability Aides  
Bus Driver Supervisor  
Bus Drivers  
Food Transporter  
Maintenance Field Supervisor  
Maintenance Workers  
EHS ASM  
EHS Family Service Worker  
EHS Home Visitor  
EHS Teacher / Teacher Floater  
CCP ASM  
CCP FSW

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(1), 1304.52 (c), and 1304.52(d)*

## **STAFF RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND TERMINATION**

### **A. General Requirements**

The Head Start program will not refuse to hire or terminate otherwise qualified job applicants based solely or primarily on an arrest record unless the arrest record is relevant to the position sought by an applicant or position held by an employee.

1. Before and employee is hired, Webb County Head Start shall conduct:
  - a. An interview with the applicant; and
  - b. A verification of personal and employment references; and
  - c. A state or national criminal record check within 24 hours of employment, as required by State law, as well as, fingerprint clearance.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(2) and 45 CFR 1301.31(b)(1)*

2. Employee declaration
  - a. Webb County requires that all current and prospective employees sign a declaration prior to employment. The declaration lists the following:
    - i. All pending and prior criminal arrests and charges related to child sexual abuse and their disposition; and
    - ii. Convictions related to other forms of child abuse and/or neglect; and
    - iii. All convictions of violent felonies.
  - b. Webb County shall review each application for employment on an individual basis in order to assess the relevancy of an arrest, a pending criminal charge, or a conviction.
  - c. The declaration required by Section (A)(2)(a) may exclude the following:
    - i. Traffic fines of \$200.00 or less;
    - ii. Any offense, other than an offense related to child abuse and/or child sexual abuse or violent felonies, committed before the prospective employee's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday which was adjudicated in a juvenile court or under a youth offender law;
    - iii. Any conviction the record of which has been expunged under Federal or State law; and
    - iv. Any conviction set aside under the Federal Youth Corrections Act or similar State authority.

***Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(2), 45 CFR 1301.31(b)(2), 45 CFR 1301.31(b)(3), and 45 CFR 1301.31(c).***

**B. Staff Recruitment**

1. The Head Start / Early Head Start Executive Director will notify the Records Manager of the vacant position and salary of said position.
2. The Records Manager will notify Administrative Services of the vacant position.
3. The Head Start Director will request approval from the Commissioner's Court to fill said vacancy.
4. The Head Start Director will provide Administrative Services with timelines for advertising / filling of the vacant position.
5. The Records Manager may recruit through ads in local / out of town newspapers, the forwarding of job announcements to private / educational institutions, placement services, World Wide Web sites, etc.
6. Applications are received at the Administrative Services Department via the internet.
7. All application will be forwarded to the Head Start Records Manager.

***Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(2)***

**C. Applicant Screening**

All screening and hiring procedures are conducted in a non-discriminatory manner as required by State and Federal law. The standards used by the Head Start program for screening job applicants shall be unrelated to a person's race, color, age, disability, religion, sex, or national origin. The standards used by the Head Start program are related to an applicant's ability to meet the job performance requirements.

1. The Records Manager will forward the job applications to the Policy Council Personnel Committee for screening.
2. The Personnel Committee shall screen all applications and sort them into two categories: "qualified" and "not qualified." The Head Start Director may or may not take part in the screening of applications contingent upon the priority of the vacant position.
3. Applications that are screened and categorized as "not qualified" will be returned to the Records Manager and kept on file for 6 months.
4. Applications of applicants that were categorized as "qualified," but not selected for an interview, are returned to the Records Manager and kept on file for 6 months. They are considered for future hiring.

***Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(2)***

**D. Applicant Interview**

1. The immediate supervisor with a vacant position is primarily responsible for selecting

the applicants to be interviewed based on the recommendations of the Personnel Committee, qualifications of applicants, and size of the applicant pool. The Head Start Director may or may not make this determination based on the priority of the vacant position.

2. The supervisor with the vacant position is primarily responsible for scheduling and conducting the interview. The Head Start Director may or may not be present during the interview based on the priority of the vacant position.
3. The interview panel may include, but is not limited to:
  - a. Head Start Director, and/or Assistant Director
  - b. Immediate supervisor and/or content area Coordinator
  - c. Area Service Manager
4. Prior to the interview, the Head Start Director and/or the immediate supervisor of the vacant position shall guide the panel regarding the confidentiality policy, appropriate interview questions, and required job duties.
5. The Records Manager and/or supervisor with the vacancy officially informs the candidate of the requirements of the position (job description).

#### Hiring Process :

1. After the interview, the panel will recommend a top candidate, with alternate applicants in order of preference, to the Policy Council.
2. A Memorandum is sent to the Policy Council stating the recommended applicant(s). Attached to the Memorandum will be the application; any written notes from the interview, and a summary of the key qualifications of the top candidate.
3. After Policy Council approval, the Records Manager contacts the top candidate, offers the position, and proceeds with the hiring process upon acceptance of the candidate. The Records Manager informs the candidate that the decision to hire is not finalized until all requirements have been appropriately met, and the hiring is contingent upon the approval of the Policy Council.
4. The Records Manager will conduct reference checks on the top candidate.
5. The candidate will obtain a TB test, a health appraisal, a criminal background check, Fingerprint clearance, and a food handlers' certificate if applicable.
6. The Records Manager informs the Treasurer's Office of the new employee.
7. The immediate supervisor provides orientation and all required trainings.
8. The new employee will be employed on a probationary status for six months.

***Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(2) and 45 CFR 1301.31(d) and 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(xi) and (xii)***

#### F. Employee Termination

1. See the Webb County Policies and Procedures Manual
2. The Policy Council must approve or disapprove decisions to terminate any person who primarily works for the Head Start and Early Head Start Program.



3. The Policy Council must approve or disapprove the decision to terminate the Head Start / Early Head Start Director.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(2) and 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(xi) and (xii)*

### **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

Head Start staff, consultants, and volunteers shall abide by the program's Standards of Conduct. The Webb County Head Start program follows the Webb County policies and procedures, in addition to the following:

1. Staff will respect and promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.
2. Staff will follow the program Confidentiality Policy concerning information about children, families, and other staff members. The program has established clearly marked, locked, and confidential files for staff, children, and families. Children's folders have a log form where staff and other authorized persons will sign prior to reviewing the child's record. The confidentiality policy is provided to parents at the beginning of the school year to assure them that information will be provided to authorized persons on a need to know basis and only to provide needed services. The policy is signed by the parent/guardian and kept on file.
3. No child will be left alone or unsupervised while in the Head Start program
4. Staff will follow the program Discipline and Guidance Policy. The Policy is signed by staff on an annual basis. A signed copy is kept in their personnel file, and the original is kept in the Licensing Binder at the center level. The Policy is as follows:
  - a. Discipline must be:
    - i. Individualized and consistent for each child;
    - ii. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
    - iii. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
  - b. A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which includes at least the following:
    - i. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
    - ii. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
    - iii. Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
    - iv. Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.
  - c. There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:
    - i. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;

- ii. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
  - iii. Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
  - iv. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
  - v. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
  - vi. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
  - vii. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
  - viii. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closed with the door closed; and
  - ix. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.
5. All employees engaged in the award and administration of contracts or other financial awards shall sign a statement that they will not solicit or accept personal gratuities, favors, or anything of significant monetary value from contractors or potential contractors.

The penalties for violating the standard of conduct will result in disciplinary action and may be ground for dismissal. Refer to the Webb County Policies and Procedures manual for additional information regarding employee conduct.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(3) and 1304.52(h)*

## **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR WEBB COUNTY HEAD START GOVERNING BODIES:**

**Webb County Commissioners' Court, Head Start Policy Council, and Parent Committee**

### **POLICY**

The Webb County Commissioners' Court and Head Start Policy Council recognize that persons involved in governance activities (Policy Council and Board of Directors) at Webb County Head Start are leaders, models, and representatives of the organization. All members will be expected to conduct themselves such that their personal and professional conduct does not have a negative effect on services or reflect badly on Webb County Head Start's public image, reputation, or credibility.

### **PROCEDURES**

- Acceptable standards of conduct will be established and periodically revised by the Webb County Head Start's Board of Directors for both Council and Board members.
- All Council and Board members will be informed of the established standards of conduct.
- The Board of Directors in its entirety will be responsible, with a simple majority vote of members present for a regularly scheduled or appropriately called special meeting, for reprimanding or removing any representative from the Council or Board due to conduct violations.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Head Start Policy Council and Webb County Commissioners' Court members:

- Will respect and promote the unique identity of each child, family, employee, Council and Board member and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability.
- Must uphold the agency's confidentiality guidelines stated as follows:
  - No information regarding children and families of children enrolled with Webb County Head Start is to be discussed outside of the work setting or Board/Council meetings;
  - Information is to be discussed within the work setting and at Board/Council meetings only as is necessary and related to program operations/business or decision-making;
  - No information learned at Board/Council meetings or while conducting Board/Council business may be discussed or used in any way outside of Board/Council activities.
- Will support and participate in a TEAMWORK approach to decision making.
- Will behave and interact respectfully while participating on Board/Council or representing the organization within the community.
- Must have an interest and concern for children and their families.
- May not accept gifts and/or gratuities as stated in the Webb County Head Start Personnel Policy Manual.
- Are prohibited from using their position on Board/Council for purposes which are, or give the appearance of being, motivated by a desire for private gain for themselves or others, such as those with family, business or other ties.
- Must not make public statements under the auspices of any agency title without the Board of Directors' approval.
- Will follow all Webb County Head Start general operating procedures.
- Will respect and uphold the legal authority of the Board of Directors to establish, review, or revise the standards of conduct for individuals participating on the Board/Council.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.52 (i)(1)(2)(3)*

## **TRAINING, DEVELOPMENT, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT**

1. **Objective:** Webb County has a structured approach to training and development, providing academic credit when applicable, which is designed to do the following:
  - a. Build working relationships among staff.
  - b. Assist staff in maximizing knowledge and skills needed to fulfill their job requirements in accordance with 45 CFR 1306.23.
  - c. Provide ongoing opportunities for staff to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to appropriately comply with the Head Start Performance Standards.

- d. Provide ongoing opportunities for staff and parents to advance academically, intellectually, and professionally.
  - e. Provide methods for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect which comply with State and local laws, using so far as possible, a helpful rather than punitive attitude.
  - f. Provide methods of planning for successful child and family transitions to and from the Head Start Program.
2. **Target Groups:** Head Start employees, Head Start families, Head Start Volunteers, Webb County Commissioners Court, and the Head Start Policy Council.
  3. **Methodology:** Webb County's training, development, and opportunities for advancement system is structured as follows:
    - a. New employees, consultants, and volunteers receive an orientation that includes the goals and philosophy of Head Start detailing the manner in which they are implemented locally.
    - b. Ongoing training is provided regarding current up-to-date Local, State, and Federal rules and regulations.
    - c. Ongoing training regarding job requirements is provided to allow for advancement opportunities to staff and parents.
    - d. An annual Pre-Service training is provided during the month of August.
    - e. Annual training is provided staff and parents on Program Governance, Child Abuse, Child Growth and Development, Safety Practices, First Aid and CPR, and many more topics as needed.
    - f. Additional Staff Development Days are strategically scheduled throughout the year (November through May) based on program planning and necessity.
    - g. For staff members who do not qualify for Federal financial assistance, the program offers to pay educational expenses for the advancement of staff members who are interested in obtaining a Child Development credential or a degree in Early Childhood.
    - h. The Program offers ongoing training opportunities for staff and parents regarding the implementation of the Head Start Performance Standards.
    - i. The Head Start Assistant Director I is responsible for offering ongoing training opportunities to staff and parents regarding the procedure for identifying and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.
    - j. The Assistant Director II and the Family Service Workers with the help of the Transition Committee, which is comprised of personnel for the two local school districts, Head Start staff and parents, elementary teachers and community agencies, facilitates an annual Transition Parent Conference. The focus of this event is to assist Head Start families in their transition from the Head Start Program to the public schools. The conference sessions are conducted by school district personnel, Head Start staff, and community agency representatives.

- k. The Head Start Director offers annual training in the month of October regarding Program Governance – Roles and Responsibilities. A training on Parliamentary Procedures is given during this annual training. A Webb County Commissioner or the Municipal Judge has typically conducted this portion of the training, which includes the oath of office given to all parents holding such a position either in the Policy Council or a Parent Committee.
- l. The program offers orientation and ongoing training to the governing boards, staff, and parents regarding Governing and Management Responsibilities.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(4) and 1304.52(k)*

### **STAFF PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS**

**Definition:** A Performance Appraisal refers to the formal process used to measure how well an employee performs his/her assigned duties and responsibilities.

**Objective:** The Webb County Head Start Program conducts annual performance reviews of each Head Start employee. The results of these evaluations are used to identify staff training and professional development needs, modify staff performance agreements, and assist each staff member in improving his/her skills and professional competence.

**Process:** The Webb County Head Start Program has established the following schedule for conducting performance appraisals:

1. The center staff evaluation is conducted in December by the Area Service Managers. This evaluation focuses on identifying the need for strategic program changes related to staff development and employee performance needs. The Program has the remaining portion of the school year to focus on incorporating the necessary changes.
2. At the end of the program year, typically in May, all staff receive an evaluation.
3. Administration and Coordinators use the results of these evaluations to plan for meeting the program's needs during the summer months. Some of the strategies used are as follows:
  - a. Schedule one-on-one training.
  - b. Provide oral and written counseling to individual employees.
  - c. Severe and chronic unsatisfactory performance may require the Head Start Director to take the employee's case to the Policy Council for consideration of continued employment with the Head Start Program.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(5) and 1304.52(i)*

## **EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Refer to the Webb County Policies and Procedures Manual

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1301.31(a)(7)*

### **FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES**

All parent fundraising activities must conform to government regulations and follow best practices. Parents are not required to participate in any fundraising activity. Staff members are not allowed to participate in any fundraising activities during working hours or on any county property.

### **OUTSIDE EMPLOYEMENT**

An employee who engages in employment outside the County must notify his/her Department Head. Such employees must also provide notification of any changes of outside job employment status. Outside employment is prohibited and is cause for disciplinary action if it:

- Is inconsistent or incompatible with employment with the County,
- Result in tardiness, absenteeism, or refusal to work overtime when deemed necessary by the Department Head,
- Adversely affect the employee's job performance,
- Conflicts with CACFP duties and responsibilities, or
- If it would create a conflict of interest.

### **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING A HEAD START EMPLOYEE OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Webb County, as a grantee agency for its Head Start Program, has developed a plan for responding to suspected or known child abuse or sexual abuse as defined in (45 CFR 1340.2(d)). This procedure will be followed for any occurrence within and outside of the program setting.

As a precaution, at no time will a child be left in the supervision of less than two employees. Head Start staff shall report suspected child abuse to Child Care Licensing, the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services Child Protective Services department or any state law enforcement agency within 48 hours after a professional employee first suspected abuse.

Head Start staff will cooperate fully with all law enforcement and Child Protective Services investigations. The Head Start program will preserve the confidentiality of all records pertaining to child abuse in accordance with the state law.

### **PROGRAM PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ABUSE**

All Head Start and Early Head Start staff persons are "mandated reporters." As mandated reporters, staff members working for Head Start and Early Head Start

programs are legally obligated to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate state child protection agency (ACF-IM-HS-15-05).

Staff persons are required to report incidents where there is a reasonable suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred or there is a substantial risk that abuse or neglect may occur, either in the care of a Head Start agency or outside of the program. It is not the responsibility of the staff person or the program to investigate whether abuse or neglect actually occurred, but rather to report probable incidents. In fact, programs and individuals must not attempt to investigate; to do so can jeopardize the accuracy of the official investigation conducted by child protective services. Any employee who is the subject of a reported case of abuse or neglect must be removed from contact with children during the state investigation and until the charge is fully resolved (ACF-IM-HS-15-05).

Head Start employees are strongly reminded that staff, consultants, and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation of children at any time. (45 CFR 1304.52 (i) (1) (iv)). Head Start children should feel safe in the program setting at all times. Disciplinary action towards children cannot involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs (45 CFR 1304.52 (i) (1) (iv)).

Early Childhood development practices encourage staff to use prevention and redirection methods for disruptive behavior. In addition, Head Start Programs should determine the root cause of the behavior to ultimately resolve the matter. All Head Start and Early Head Start programs must have mental consultants available who can assist them in identifying the causes of children's challenging behavior and implement appropriate strategies to ensure children and staff are safe.

If an employee is charged with child abuse or neglect the following are the procedures:

- 1) The Head Start/Early Head Start employee who received the report or charge against the set employee will immediately make a report:
  - To a law enforcement agency- The City of Laredo Police Department, at (956) 795-2899; or
  - CPS division of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at (800) 252-5400 or on the web at [www.txabusehotline.org](http://www.txabusehotline.org) .
- 2) Employee will be removed while the ongoing investigation is conducted, and placed at a location where children are not in attendance.
- 3) The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services will conduct a very thorough investigation.
- 4) The employee will continue to work at a designated place until notification is obtained whether employee has been cleared of any violation(s).
- 5) If cleared of all abuse allegations, the employee resumes his/her position.
- 6) If employee has been found to be in violation, the program will take steps to terminate employment.

**Head Start Employee Policy  
For  
Child Abuse & Neglect Investigation**

**Evidence of Abuse & Neglect by a Head Start Employee(s) / Actions following the investigation of the report**

If a Head Start employee or any person has cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be further adversely affected by abuse or neglect he/she must report immediately or within 48 hours, pursuant to Texas Family Code Section §261.109: Failure to Report Penalty. When an incident is identified, all precise & pertinent information regarding the case will be obtained by the employee who made the initial contact with the child and who has the information first-hand – the employee is therefore deemed the designated “mandated reporter.”

The Executive Head Start Director shall maintain records of allegations, investigations and reports that a child has been abused or neglected by a Head Start employee. Such records will be maintained at the Head Start Main Office. The records shall include any reports made to the Child Protective Services and/or the local Law Enforcement Agency; such Department(s) will have access to all such Webb County Head Start records.

An employee who has had a Child Protective Services (CPS) report filed against him/her will immediately be removed from contact with or control over all children by re-assignment to another position; if that is not possible, Policy Council will determine if the individual will be placed on administrative leave or leave without pay until clearance is established. If the employee is placed on administrative leave/leave without pay, they will be advised that they must be available at any time for contact by local law enforcement, Child Protective Services and/or the Executive Head Start Director.

The Executive Director may apply the following for individuals who have been placed on Administrative Leave or leave without pay due to a CPS Report (ninety days or more):

1. Probationary Employees - The Executive Head Start Director and the Policy Council may take action to terminate the employee during their probation period if the decision is considered in the best interest of the Head Start Program.
2. Non-Probationary Employees – The employee may be detailed, pending an investigation, to another position as long as the employee does not have contact with or control over children. Employee(s), who have an unresolved CPS Report and have been deemed a threat to children requiring prolonged administrative leave or leave without pay (ninety days or more), may be deferred to Policy Council for termination.

After an investigation has been completed, if the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), based upon the results of such investigation, has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected by an employee who has been entrusted with the care of a child, and if employee is placed on the Department of Children and Families abuse and neglect registry because the employee poses a risk to the health, safety or welfare of children, TDFPS shall notify the Executive Head Start



Director through a Child-Care Inspection Form # 2936 with such findings concerning such investigation.

**Closing a CPS Report and Notification to Alleged Offender**

A closure report # 2936 will be issued to the Executive Head Start Director by TDFPS with the results of the alleged employee whom an allegation of child abuse was raised. The Executive Director or an assigned representative will review the contents of the notification with the employee. The employee will sign a receipt page to document that he/she was informed of the closure of the CPS Report. The signature receipt along with a copy of the notification will be included in the official CPS Report file. This final action closes the CPS Report. If administrative or proactive action is proposed or corrective action is required that affects the employee, it is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure these action(s) are carried out.

The Executive Head Start Director shall provide to the Policy Council, during an executive meeting, any records maintained or kept in the employee's file for the purpose of an investigation by TDFPS of suspected child abuse or neglect. Any records maintained or kept in his/her files shall include, but not be limited to, supervisory records, reports of competence, personal character and efficiency maintained in such staff's personnel file with reference to evaluation of performance as a professional employee, and records of the personal misconduct of such teacher/employee.

**Confidentiality**

All cases of child abuse allegations shall be treated within the guidelines of Federal laws protecting children, employees, and all parties involved. Confidentiality must be a priority throughout the process. The Mandated Reporter may remain anonymous, but in order to document that a Mandated Reporter did not fail to report child abuse in accordance with Federal law, and so that law enforcement and child protective services can contact the Mandated Reporter, a Report must be completed. The identity of all reported victims must always be protected and must not be disclosed to anyone who does not have a need to know.

**Disciplinary Action for Failure to Follow Policy**

Any employee who fails to comply with the requirements of this policy shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

**Acknowledgement of receipt**

By signing this form, you confirm receipt of this policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature/Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness Signature/Date

See Attachment for Discipline and Guidance Policies and Procedures

**PROCEDURES FOR HEAD START PROGRAM GOVERNANCE**

*Pursuant to CFR Parts 1304.50.*

**HONERABLE WEBB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT AND  
HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERS:**

**INTRODUCTION**

Webb County, acting through its Commissioners Court, which serves as the Governing Body for the Head Start Program, has established, approved and implemented written procedures describing the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body for governance and management and procedures describing how the Governing Body and the Policy Council will implement shared decision-making pursuant to the rules and regulations promulgated under 45 CFR 1304.50(g)(1), as authorized by 42 U.S.C. 9801, *et seq.*, in order to continue to ensure that Head Start is a high quality program for children and families that are served.

The Webb County Commissioners Court and the Head Start Policy Council are committed to working in partnership with key management staff to develop, review, and approve or disapprove the following procedures for the Head Start Program Governance.

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**WEBB COUNTY JUDGE / DATE**

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**POLICY COUNCIL CHAIR / DATE**

## **PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAM PLANNING**

**OBJECTIVE:** The Webb County Head Start / Early Head Start Program is a comprehensive child development program which serves children from birth to 5 years of age, and their families. The program is child-focused, and has the overall goal of increasing the social competence of young children in low-income families. "Social competence" means the child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with either his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. Social competence takes into account the interrelatedness of social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

The Webb County Head Start services are family-centered, following the tenets that children develop in the context of their family and culture and that parents are respected as the primary educators and nurturers of their children. Head Start offers family members with opportunities and support for growth and change, believing that people can identify their own strengths, needs, and interests and are capable of finding resolutions.

The Webb County Head Start program has a long tradition of delivering comprehensive and high quality services designed to foster healthy development in low-income children. The program provides a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development, medical, dental, mental health, nutrition, and parent involvement (including disabilities). In addition, the entire range of Head Start services is responsive and appropriate to each child and family's developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience.

### **METHODOLOGY:**

- The Head Start Policy Council actively participates in the development, approval, and implementation of program plans as outlined in the Federal Register, Volume 61, No. 215, dated Tuesday, November 5, 1996.
- The Policy Council represents the families served by the program by playing a key role in identifying the needs of Head Start families. Therefore, through their representation by the Policy Council, the underprivileged Head Start families become an integral part of the program decision-making process.
- The Policy Council has regularly scheduled meetings with formal agendas that are posted (as per the Open Meetings Act), and a set of By-Laws.
- The formal structure for parent participation in program planning includes center-based committees who elect Representatives to serve on the Policy Council.
- Members of the Webb County Commissioners Court consult with Head Start administrative staff regarding program issues that affect Head Start children and their families.
- The Head Start administrative staff consults and plans with the Webb County Commissioners Court, the Policy Council, and community representatives to review and assess the program operations, goals and objectives.
- The Head Start staff provides clerical, technical, and administrative support to the Policy Council and the Commissioners Court.

- Data collected from the annual Community Assessment is analyzed and serves as a tool in determining program needs and is the basis for program planning.
- Recommendations by reviewers based on the Annual Self-Assessment help determine program needs.
- The Commissioners Court and the Head Start Policy Council work in partnership for planning long-range and short-term goals.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(iii) and 1305.3 and 1304.51(a)*

## **PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

### **Purpose:**

Goals and objectives are the basic form of effective and systematic planning. They assist the program in adhering to the overall track of present performance with an outlook on the future. The purpose of the Webb County Head Start Program's Goals and Objectives is primarily to:

- A. Identify the issues that the organization needs to address so as to successfully carry out its mission in the community.
- B. Give the organization direction for charting its course for the future, and working together toward a common set of goals.
- C. Set criteria in terms of time, space, quantity, and quality.

While some goals and objective may present a longer range of focus for meeting the changing needs of the service area, the following concentrate more on the plans of the program for fiscal year 2012-2013. This plan is designed for mission accomplishment of the Head Start program.

### **Recommendation:**

Program staff and parents met to discuss and formulate the program goals and objectives for fiscal year 2015 - 2016. The recommendations are as follow:

### **Overall Vision for Growth:**

To improve the quality of services offered to enrolled children and families by using advanced technological resources, providing professional development designed to improve instruction and learning, and strengthening relationships with community partners.

**Resources Available:**

- Head Start funding
- Webb County support/services (Commissioner’s Court, Attorney, Auditor, Treasurer, Purchasing Agent, Welfare Department, Community Action Agency, Risk Management, MIS, etc.)
- In-kind contributions from parents/community partners Laredo Community College, Texas A&M International University, United Independent School District, and Laredo Independent School District partnerships

**Strengths:**

- Degreed teachers (B.A., A.A. in Early Child Development)
- Experienced staff (20+ years with this program)
- Full-time Computer Specialist
- Numerous community partners
- Licensed Vocational Nurse to provide early intervention and prevention screenings.

**Growth Areas to be addressed:**

- Expand service sites based on community needs
- Increase enrollment of children with disabilities.
- Retain qualified teaching staff.
- Increase integration with LEAs for dual enrollment.

**Ongoing Professional Development to be addressed:**

- On-going education for obtaining advanced degrees.
- On-going training needs for use of advanced technology.
- On-going training needs for volunteer recruitment.

<b>ONE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN</b>							
<b>Content Area</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Person (s) Responsible</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timetable</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Education</b>	The program will ensure that all enrolled children possess the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in school and later in life.	1. The program will utilize the Child Development and Early Learning Framework that outlines the essential areas of development and learning to establish and update school readiness goals for children, monitor children’s progress, align curricula, and conduct program	Head Start Director Assistant Director Education Director Education Assistants Area Service Managers	Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment kits  Training  Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework  Early Head Start / Head	\$5,000	On-going	Content Area Monitoring Report  Outcome Reports  CLASS Reports

		<p>planning.</p> <p>2. The eleven Domains will be represented in the School Readiness Goals.</p> <p>3. The Head Start Parent and Family Engagement foundations will be used to support school readiness goals and child outcomes such as enhanced school readiness skills, sustained learning, and development into elementary.</p> <p>4. The program will link health and school readiness by identifying and treating children's health issues and helping families comprehend developmental screening and referral, providing engaging, empowering, and action-oriented health education programs that are designed for and with families to support child development in culturally and linguistically responsive and meaningful ways, as well as prevention when health issues affect children's learning.</p> <p>5. The Head Start Director and Education Director will present the school readiness goals to the governing body annually for input / approval.</p> <p>6. The School Readiness Team will ensure and monitor progress</p>	School Readiness Team	Start CLASS instrument			
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		<p>in aligning the goals with the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework, Texas Pre-Kinder guideline, and the requirements and expectations of the local education agencies.</p> <p>7. The HS/EHSClassroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) instrument will be used to assess the quality of classroom interactional processes. The Education Director, Education Assistants and Area Service Managers will assess classrooms two times in the program year.</p>					
<b>Early Head Start – Child Care Partnerships</b>	The program will have nine seamless, integrated classrooms with two private child care centers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with each partner.</li> <li>2. Provide staff training regarding rules / regulations of Child Care Services and Early Head Start to staff assigned to each site.</li> <li>3. Recruit, enroll children.</li> <li>4. Provide on-going support and training to address any issues that may arise.</li> </ol>	<p>Head Start Director</p> <p>Assistant Directors</p> <p>Education Director</p> <p>Teaching Staff</p>	T&TA Funds	\$18,750	9/15 and on-going	<p>Content Area Monitoring Report</p> <p>Licensing Reports</p>
<b>Early Head Start</b>	The program will provide all services in compliance with Performance Standards.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The program will no longer have a Delegate Agency.</li> <li>2. Two Home Visitor positions will be added to the budget.</li> <li>5. The Home Visitors will maintain an office</li> </ol>	<p>Head Start Director</p> <p>Assistant Director I</p> <p>EHS Area Service Manager</p>	<p>Trainings</p> <p>Various supplies and equipment</p>	\$50,000	10/15 and on-going	<p>State Licensing Reports</p> <p>Local Assessment Report</p> <p>Federal Review</p>

		<p>at Little Palominos and Sierra Vista.</p> <p>6. Socializations will be offered at both EHS/HS integrated sites.</p> <p>5. The EHS program will be fully enrolled at all times.</p> <p>6. All EHS/HS employees will be provided with staff development opportunities to comply with mandated qualifications.</p> <p>7. Any opportunity to apply for funding to expand EHS service will be considered.</p>	EHS Staff				Results
<b>Career and Professional Development</b>	<p>All Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care Partnership employees will comply with local, State, and Federal mandated trainings and will be provided with information and support to access career advancement opportunities.</p>	<p>1. The program will provide opportunities for employees to comply with mandated trainings / certifications / credentials.</p> <p>2. The program will ensure that all employees participate in mandated trainings.</p> <p>3. The Education Content Area will reformat the Professional Development Plan.</p> <p>3. The Education Assistants will assist full-time employees who offer direct educational services to children with creating a professional development plan and shall ensure that such plans are regularly evaluated for their impact on teacher and staff effectiveness. The agency and the employee shall</p>	<p>Head Start Director</p> <p>Education Director</p> <p>Education Assistants</p> <p>Records Manager</p> <p>Mentor Teachers /Coaches</p> <p>All Staff</p>	<p>Training and Technical Assistance Funds</p>	\$80,000	On-going	<p>Personnel Records</p> <p>Staff Training Logs</p> <p>Professional Development Plans/Teaching Practice Action Plan</p> <p>State Licensing Reports</p> <p>Federal Review Results</p>



		<p>implement the plan to the extent feasible and practicable.</p> <p>4. The Education Content Area will implement a Practice Based Coaching (PBC) in order to help teachers use high-quality teaching practices with confidence and competence in helping children make gains toward school readiness goals. All teachers and staff will use an effective curricula and research-based teaching practices. The Teaching Learning &amp; Collaborating (TLC), the TLC method will pair a small group of teachers with a trained coach who will help them use evidence-based teaching practices to improve children's learning and development.</p>				
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*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(iv) and 1304.51(a)(1)(ii) and 1305.3*

## **RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND ENROLLMENT**

### **RECRUITMENT:**

#### **Purpose:**

The recruitment process is designed to systematically seek children from the most disadvantaged homes. The grantee will conduct a Community Assessment within the service area to determine the community's strengths, needs, and resources. The grantee's recruitment area is all of Webb County, Texas. The Community Assessment will include demographic make-up of Head Start eligible children and families. In regarding child care programs, estimated number of children with disabilities, data on social service and needs of eligible families will also be included in the Community Assessment. The grantee will utilize the Community Assessment results to develop the program's goals and objectives and will be the basis for program planning. The grantee will determine the recruitment area within the service area to be served based on the results of the Community Assessment. Children with

the greatest needs are recruited and will be considered for selection and enrollment once they meet the program's Criteria selection policy.

The program serves eligible children who meet age requirement by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the enrollment year. The program will enroll at least 90 percent of the funded enrollment from low-income families. The program has developed a policy to enroll children whose families exceed the income guidelines. The program can enroll up to ten percent of the funded enrollment from above income families. The grantee will verify the child's eligibility prior to enrolling the child. Results of the Community Assessment and parent surveys will be used to designate priorities in setting the selection criteria. In each of the two years following the development of a complete Community Assessment an update will be conducted.

The program will ensure that a signed statement is on file reflecting the child is income eligible to participate in the program. The grantee will solicit applications from eligible families year round, and assist families in filling out the application. The grantee will develop a waiting list that ranks children according to the program's selection criteria. This process will ensure eligible children enter the program as soon as a vacancy occurs. The grantee will ensure that each Head Start child is allowed to remain in the program until kindergarten is available for the child.

**Groups Involved:**

Head Start Family and Community Partnership staff, education and disability staff, Head Start parents, local community agencies, and public schools participate in recruitment efforts.

**Process:**

Recruitment begins in April of each year. The Family Service Worker is responsible for recruitment, which is done using a variety of methods.

1. Advertise Head Start services by placing posters in grocery stores, public agencies, and other strategic areas in the community.
2. Sending flyers to community partners and the two local education agencies.
3. Participating in media announcements (radio, newspaper and television).
4. Participating in targeted house-to-house recruitment based on the needs identified in the Community Assessment:
  - a. To locate the most needy and eligible children and families.
  - b. To maintain a healthy waiting list.

During recruitment, the partnership and coordination with other agencies serving Head Start eligible children is essential. A Head Start Family Service Worker and a representative of a community agency will meet to schedule appointments for recruiting clients to screen for eligibility of Head Start services. The Family Service Worker will conduct presentations at various non-profit and social service organizations to provide an overview of Head Start services. Additionally, this program will encourage community partners to refer clients for Head Start services.

**Recruitment of Disabled Children:**

Recruitment is very closely coordinated with community partners such as Early Childhood Intervention services, rehabilitation centers and the school districts. These agencies work closely with Early Head Start and Head Start to provide services to all disabled children within the community.

The Family Service Workers / Family Advocate are responsible for ensuring that the program is always fully enrolled. Typically, applications are taken at the center; however, exceptions are made for individuals who are not able to come to the center. Enrollment also takes place at public health fairs, community agencies, and the applicant's home. The Disability Coordinator coordinates efforts with the Family and Community Partnership staff by assisting with home visits, requesting information from specialized providers, and providing information to parents regarding the Head Start disability program.

**SELECTION OF HEAD START CHILDREN AND FAMILIES****Purpose and Procedures:**

The selection of children and families to be served by the Head Start program will be done according to all applicable Federal regulations. Families with the lowest income and most need are given priority for enrollment. Enrollment takes place throughout the year. Families in crisis are considered for placement as soon as possible. If a slot is available, all efforts are made for the child to be enrolled in the Head Start program as soon as possible. Head Start Family Service Workers / Early Head Start Family Advocate and the Program Director are responsible for this process.

**Waiting List:**

The Family and Community Partnership staff is responsible for keeping a waiting list of eligible applicants for each center. Below are procedures on prioritizing the enrollment from the waiting list:

1. Families that are "most in need" are given priority for enrollment.
  - a. Referral from Child Protective Service
  - b. Family Crisis (Domestic violence, displaced families, etc.)
  - c. Disabled Child
  - d. Foster Children
  - e. Homeless Families
2. Four year old children are given priority over three year old children.

**ENROLLMENT:**

Enrollment in the Head Start / Early Head Start program is done according to the following Enrollment Policies, which are based on Federal regulations 45 CFR Part 1305 of the Head Start Act, and all other applicable Federal regulations.

1. It is the policy of Head Start Program to provide services to the children of families who are in the greatest need and meet income guidelines established by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). No less than 90 % of all children enrolled must be of low income families.

2. For Head Start, applicants must be three (3) years of age as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of the enrollment year.
3. Not less than 10 % of all enrolled children will be children with disabilities, as defined in Head Start regulations.
4. Families that exceed the poverty guidelines will be considered for placement not to exceed 10% of the funded enrollment. Priority will be given to the following:
  - a. Referral from Child Protective Services;
  - b. Family crisis; and
  - c. Child with a disability.

### **Enrollment Procedures**

Enrollment is conducted year-round. Family and Community Partnership staff assists families with the application process. Typically, enrollment takes place at Head Start / Early Head Start centers. Applications can be taken in the following manner:

- By appointment
- Walk-ins
- At health fairs and other community events
- Applicant's homes

The following information is provided to the family:

- a. Program information
- b. Required documentation:
  - Income verification
  - Birth certificate
  - Immunization Record
  - Proof of residence (utility bill)
  - Proof that family receives any other type of assistance
- c. List of center locations
- d. Referral to Laredo Health Department (if child's immunizations are not current) and other community agencies if the family has an emergency or special needs.
- e. Date of first class day.

### **Waiting List:**

Applications are taken year-round in order to maintain a waiting list. Upon qualification for the program a child is placed on a waiting list if there is not a vacancy in the program.

### **Enrollment Procedure (for the beginning of the program year)**

- a. Family Service Workers are responsible for enrollment.
- b. Steps followed by Family Service Workers during the month of August:
  - Applications are taken by Family Service worker.

- Family Service Worker will interview family to complete the enrollment documents.
  - Families will be notified of appointments to meet their child's teacher at their respective centers.
  - After completion of all documents by education staff, the child's folder is returned to Family Service Worker for final verification.
- c. Prior to first day of class, teachers receive a list of enrollees with their respective folders.
- d. The Family Service Workers continue intake of applications so as to develop a waiting list according to the program's selection criteria.

**Re-enrollment:**

Each child enrolled in a Head Start program, except those enrolled in a migrant program, must be allowed to remain in Head Start until kindergarten or first grade is available for the child in the child's community. The Head Start program may choose not to enroll a child when there are compelling reasons for the child not to remain in Head Start, such as when there is a dramatic increase in the child's family income and/or there is a child with a greater need for Head Start services. If a child has been found to be income eligible and is participating in a Head Start program, he or she will remain income eligible throughout the enrollment year and the immediately succeeding enrollment year.

**Vacancies:**

The program has developed a form to monitor attendance. The analysis includes reason for child's absences, number of days absent, and will identify absenteeism trends per child. In the case of children's absences that are not medically necessary, staff will offer family support. The grantee will ensure chronic absenteeism is investigated prior to a child's slot being declared vacant.

The Webb County Head Start program must maintain funded enrollment. When a vacancy exists, no more than 30 calendar days may elapse before the vacancy is filled. The program may elect not to fill a vacancy when 60 calendar days or less remain in the program's enrollment year.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50 (d)(1)(vii) and 1305*

**FUNDING APPLICATIONS/FINANCIAL REPORTS**

**PURPOSE:**

To describe the procedures that need to take place in the review of financial reports, budget revisions, refunding and new applications.

### **STAFF RESPONSIBILITY TO THE BOARDS:**

Head Start staff is responsible for providing the Governing Board and the Policy Council with sufficient information and supporting documentation that will contribute to the decision-making process. Training on how to read budgets and expenditure reports will be scheduled as needed or as new members are seated. It is the responsibility of Head Start staff to ensure that technical support is offered and conducted in a manner that promotes self-confidence and self-respect. Trainings should be designed to provide motivation, appropriate decision-making skills, and not overwhelm, or intimidate.

### **POLICY COUNCIL BOARD:**

During the month of October the Policy Council Chairperson will appoint a Budget Committee to review and recommend major budget changes and approval or disapproval for new or refunding applications. Monthly financial reports are provided to Policy Council members for review and discussion.

### **REFUNDING APPLICATION AND TIME-TABLE:**

Prior to the refunding budget, the Head Start Director has the responsibility to train Policy Council members on the application process. Input from Head Start staff and parents in preparing the refunding package is obtained from March to April. The Head Start Director will also solicit input from the County Auditor's department. The following goals and objectives are kept in mind:

1. A child can benefit most from a comprehensive, inter-disciplinary program that fosters development and remedies problems. The child's entire family, as well as the community, must be involved. The program should maximize the strengths and unique experiences of each child. The family, which is perceived as the principal influence on the child's development, must be a direct participant in the program. Local communities are allowed latitude in developing creative program designs so long as the basic goals, objectives and standards of a comprehensive program are adhered to.
2. Results indicating needs from the Community Assessment play a major role in the planning process.

The following is the time-table and procedure for the planning and development of the refunding grant: *The same procedure in the development of new grant is followed with the change in months depending upon the submission date of the application.*

### **January & February**

Financial objectives are taken based on the community assessment, the program's Strategic Plan (long-range program goals and short-term objectives) derived from the results of the Community Assessment. Both the program option and its goals and objectives need Policy Council approval.

### **March**

Head Start Staff and parents are notified to submit their input/needs to be taken into consideration. This is done during staff meeting and parent committee and policy council meetings.

### **April**

Head Start administrative staff works on the budget with the recommendation of the Budget Committee from the Policy Council and input from each member of the Commissioner's Court. Input is also solicited from the County Auditor, Risk Manager and Governing Body.

### **April / May**

The Head Start Director presents the budget to Policy Council for approval or disapproval.

### **May**

The Head Start Director presents the budget to the Governing Board.

### **June 1<sup>st</sup>**

Deadline for submission of the Refunding application.

Based on guidance and information received from the Regional Office, this schedule adheres to the funding cycle of the Webb County Head Start program.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50 (d)(1)(i)*

## **POLICY COUNCIL, POLICY COMMITTEE, AND PARENT COMMITTEE REIMBURSEMENT**

### **PURPOSE:**

To develop procedures to enable low-income members (Policy Council and/or parent committee members) to participate fully in their committee responsibilities by providing, if necessary, reimbursements for reasonable expenses incurred by the members.

### **PROCEDURE:**

The Policy or Parent Committee members will follow the following procedures.

- a. Member will submit request in writing to Parent Involvement Coordinator.
- b. Member will submit appropriate invoices.
- c. Head Start Director must approve reimbursement request.
- d. Payment dispersed to members.

### **REIMBURSEMENT INCIDENTALS:**

- a. Gasoline/Bus or taxis fare
- b. Baby Sitter
- c. Meals (if applicable)
- d. Other incidentals

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50 (f)*

## **ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT**

### **PURPOSE:**

To determine the process the Webb County Head Start Program will take in order to conduct the annual self-assessment. The Annual Self-Assessment provides the program with the means to regularly assess its management systems and program operations in order to continually strengthen the program and the services delivered to children and families. The Self Assessment process provides an opportunity for involving program leaders, such as parents, Policy Council members, governing body members, and Community stakeholders, and for making staff more aware of how the program operates and is viewed by its consumers. Through Self-Assessment, the program reinforces how program leaders engage in shared decision-making.

### **GOALS:**

- Continuous quality improvement to strengthen services provided to and for children and their families.
- Comply with Federal mandates (meet *Head Start Program Performance Standards – Head Start Act*).
- Move toward program excellence

### **RESPONSIBLE PARTIES:**

- a. The Webb County Commissioners Court has the general responsibility to guide and oversee the function.
- b. The Head Start Director has the operating responsibility to carry out the function and train the participants.
- c. The Policy Council must approve the process of the function prior to conducting the self-assessment. Member of the Policy Council should participate in Self Assessment.

### **PROCESS:**

#### **The FIRST stage is Preparing for Self-Assessment**

The Head Start Director will take steps to prepare for Self-Assessment by convening a team to lead the process, informing the Policy Council and Webb County Commissioner's Court, selecting and recruiting qualified participants to serve on various teams, and informing others who will be affected. Team members need to receive training on the regulations as well as the process they will use to complete the Self-Assessment booklets assigned to their team.

#### **The SECOND stage is Collecting and Synthesizing the Information**

The analysis information is further analyzed by establishing patterns of identified needs; uncovering underlying causes and systemic issues; and determining priorities for change and



improvement. At this stage, the program will ask for clarifications on regulations or policy from the Federal Program Manager, if needed.

**The THIRD stage is Interpreting the Information**

Team members observe activities, review documents, interview people, and record and summarize their findings according to the instructions provided in their packet. Using this information, team members begin the *analysis process* by synthesizing the data from multiple sources and consolidating this information into an analysis that identifies program strengths, specific weaknesses and areas to strengthen.

**The FOURTH stage is Strengthening the Program**

The Self-Assessment has little value unless the program uses the information to drive program improvements. In this final stage, leaders use Self-Assessment results as a driving force to develop program improvement goals, desired outcomes, and action plans. Both the results of the Self-Assessment and the plan for program improvement will be communicated to the Policy Council, Webb County Commissioner's Court, parents, and community partners.

**PARTICIPATING MEMBERS:**

The Webb County Commissioners Court, Head Start Policy Council, consultants, management staff, Coordinators, Center Staff, and parents.

**SELF-ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE:**

Day	1	Training on Self Assessment Process
Day	2-6	Staff interviews Interview with community partnership, Policy Council, Family groups and childcare partnership. Center Visitations
Day	7	Report Writing Report to Staff

**PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN:**

- Prepared by Head Start Director and Management staff based on results.
- Approved by Webb County Commissioners' Court and Policy Council.

***Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(viii) and 45 CFR 1304.51(1)(i)***

## **SELECTION/COMPOSTION OF POLICY COUNCIL AND POLICY GROUP**

### **PURPOSE:**

To determine the composition of the members serving on the Head Start Policy Council.

### **TYPE OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

- At least 51% of the Policy Council members must be parents of currently enrolled children.
- Community representatives are selected from the local community.
- Former Head Start Parents
- Major public and private community, civic or professional organizations.

### **METHOD OF SELECTION:**

In September, at the monthly parent meeting, parents from each Head Start center elect a Policy Council Representative and an Alternate. Head Start staff members and their relatives are not eligible to serve on the Parent Committee or the Policy Council in a voting capacity.

Community Representatives are solicited from the community. Community Representatives must be familiar with community resources, and/or have the expertise in serving low-income children and families. A perspective representative is required to submit a letter to the Policy Council stating their intent to participate. The letter is then submitted to the Policy Council, who then votes to accept or reject the applicant request.

### **TERM OF OFFICE:**

Both parent and community representative must stand for election or re-election annually. Membership is limited to a combined total of three years.

### **MEETING:**

A monthly meeting is held the third or fourth Thursday of the month.

A Special Meeting and Committee Meetings can be called on an "as needed" basis.

### **FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - AT A MINIMUM:**

- Work in partnership with key management staff and the Commissioners Court to develop procedures and policies.
- Approve or disapprove all funding applications.
- Plan and coordinate the program's goals and objectives
- Procedures for defining recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities.
- Approve procedures for the program's Self Assessment and Independent audit.
- Assist parent committees in planning, coordinating and organizing program activities.
- Hire and terminate the Head Start Director and Head Start Staff.

### **PARENT REPRESENTATIVES RESPONSIBILITY:**

Each Policy Council member is responsible for giving a report to the parents at the center(s) that they represent. The report must include all the activities that took place during Policy Council meetings. This procedure will keep all Head Start parents informed of all program activities and Commissioners Court approvals.

**STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES:**

During the first Policy Council meeting in September, the Head Start Director is responsible for providing training to the members on their responsibilities and functions. During the month of October, a Parliamentary Procedure training is provided to ensure that the members are aware of the mechanics of conducting meetings. Trainings are on-going throughout the year to both the Policy Council and the Governing Board. Head Start staff, at the request of the Policy Council Chairperson, attends Policy Council meetings to provide guidance, not to conduct the entire meeting.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(vi)*

**GOVERNING BODY AND POLICY COUNCIL SHARED DECISION MAKING  
MANAGEMENT/RESPONSIBILITIES COMMITTEE**

**PURPOSE:**

To determine procedures on how the Governing Body and the Policy Council will implement shared decision-making.

**SHARED DECISION-MAKING:**

Strategies for shared decision-making between the Webb County Commissioners Court and the Policy Council will be as follows:

The Head Start Director will ensure that both Boards receive regular and accurate information about the program. This will include proposed policies, funding, program changes and/or concerns. This will be accomplished through meetings or conferences, forums for open discussions between the groups, joint meetings on specific issues or concerns, and/or open channels of communications. This procedure will enable both Boards to make appropriate shared decision-making during their meeting.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(ii)*

**INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION BETWEEN GOVERNING BODY AND  
POLICY COUNCIL  
PROCEDURES FOR RESOLVING IMPASSE SITUATIONS**

**Webb County Commissioners Head Start Program Procedures for Resolving  
Impasse Situations**

**Background:**

Each Grantee and Policy Council jointly must establish written procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures, between the governing body and policy group.

### **Introduction:**

In cases of non-concurrence between the Governing Board and the Policy Council on significant issues and the absence of an established arbitration procedure, the Policy Council could be circumvented. This would violate the Head Start Performance Standards and could prompt lawsuit against the Grantee. Additionally, an excessive amount of time is spent attempting to settle issues without a standardized procedure where impasse situations occur. A disruption of Head Start services to families and children could take place in some instances, and parent/staff morale suffer as a result of impasse situations.

### **Purposes:**

- To resolve impasse situations without outside bidding and impartial arbitration.
- To preserve respect and exemplify the partnership principle in Head Start, despite differences between the parties involved.
- To uphold the partnership principle in Head Start.
- To uphold the interest of the children served by the program.

### **Definition of Impasse:**

Impasse occurs when the Governing Board proposes final action in the fourteen function areas of concurrence, as described in the Governance and Management Responsibilities, and the Policy Council does not concur within 15 working days or by the time of the next regular scheduled Policy Council meeting, whichever occurs later.

### **Impasse Committee Composition & Powers:**

Impasse Committee are composed of six (6) persons. Three (3) are selected by the Governing Board, and three (3) by the Policy Council

The Head Start Director shall act as resource persons to the Impasse Committee.

The Impasse Committee shall convene on an informal basis for the purpose of concurrence and the subsequent assurance of mutually agreed recommendation to the Governing Board and the Policy Council.

### **Preliminary Procedures:**

1. After informal discussions, if the Commissioners Court believes the Policy Council will not approve a decision and the Commissioners Court wishes to formalize the approval process, they should notify the Policy Council in writing. The notice shall contain statement of the reason for supporting the proposed decision or action.
2. Within ten (10) days after receipt of the notice, the Policy Council shall hold a special meeting for consideration of the proposed action.
3. Immediately after the special meeting, the Policy Council shall notify the Commissioners Court in writing of its approval or disapproval of the proposed action. The notice shall contain a statement of the reason for approval or disapproval.

4. In the event of a disapproval, and if the Commissioners Court desires further consideration of the matter, they shall initiate a meeting with the Policy Council for the purpose of attempting to resolve their differences.
5. If, after these efforts, the Commissioners Court and the Policy Council are unable to reach agreement, the proposed action shall not be taken. the Commissioners Court must invoke the arbitration procedures if it is unable to abide by the decision on the Policy Council.

**Arbitration Committee Composition and Powers:**

The Arbitration Committee is composed of six (6) arbitrators (3 representing each Board). However, three (3) members must be disinterested parties; One selected by the Governing Board, one (1) selected by the Policy Council, and one (1) mutually selected.

A list of the Arbitrators, with their addresses and phone numbers, and ranked in the order in which they were called to serve on the Arbitration Committee, shall be forwarded to Regional Head Start office.

Arbitration Committee members will send written notice of the resolution of the impasse to the Policy Council, the Commissioners Court and the Head Start Regional Office.

**Notice of Impasse:**

The Webb County Judge and the Policy Council Chairperson must send written notice of impasse within five (5) working days following preliminary decisions of non-concurrence.

The Impasse Committee shall be called to convene by the Head Start Director with fifteen (15) working days (or the scheduled meeting date of the Policy Council or the Board; whichever is the later) following non-concurrence.

The Arbitration Committee shall be called to convene within fifteen (15) working day of the scheduled meeting date of the Policy Council or the Commissioners Court (whichever is the later), following the Impasse Committee's final attempt to resolve issues of non-concurrence.

**Notice or Arbitration Decision:**

The Arbitration Committee shall notify the Policy Council, the Commissioners Court, and the Regional Head Start office within five (5) working days of its decision on issues of non-concurrence.

The Regional Off ice shall notify the Policy Council and the Commissioners Court of the Arbitration Committee's (as convened by the Regional Office) decision on issues of impasse or non-concurrence.

**Scope of Arbitration:**

Biding arbitration shall prevail in the event of impasse between the Policy Council and the Commissioners Court on the following issues on Appendix A- Governance & Management Responsibilities.

1. Part III, Human Resources Management Section (b) and (d)
2. Part I, Planning, Section (e)

**Breakdown of Arbitration Procedure:**

Should the Arbitration Committee not convene within 15 working days of impasse, the Regional Office of Project Head Start shall request to convene the Arbitration Committee.

**Cost Incurred:**

Cost incurred in Arbitration procedures will be absorbed by the Head Start Program and the Webb County Commissioners Court.

**Interested Parties:**

Interested parties shall include any parent/family member of children currently enrolled in the Head Start Program, any Head Start staff, and any member of the Policy Council and Commissioners Court.

**Statement of Commitment:**

To make every good faith effort to resolve differences between the Commissioners Court and the Policy Council on an amicable basis, so as to avoid impasse and having to enter with the arbitration procedure. If in the event of impasse or arbitration, the parties involved are committed to cooperate fully in all respects with the Impasse Committee and/or Arbitration Committee in their efforts to resolve impasse issues. This procedure is committed to resolving issues of impasse and non-concurrence. The process represents the true spirit of Head Start and thus, both reflect and respect the tenets of the legislation.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50 (h)*

**RESOLVING COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS  
CLIENT RIGHTS COMMITTEE PROCEDURES**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Client Right Committee is to provide a due process recourse to the clients of this program regarding allegations brought against them by program staff and volunteers, or other program participants when such allegations result in actions by the program to suspend or terminate services. The Clients Right Committee shall also review all complaints to the committee by a client (s) concerning client abuse, discrimination, denial of services or other actions allegedly caused by the program, its employees or volunteers which infringe on the client(s) rights to be served.

**Selection of Committee Members**

The committee members are appointed to serve a period of one year. The membership is composed of a total of six (6) persons appointed by the Head Start Director from three

categories: two (2) county staff representing county departments; two (2) Head Start Policy Council members; and two (2) citizens who are not employed by the county.

**Client Complaints Procedures:**

1. The Clients(s) shall present all grievances in writing to the Head Start Director using the appropriate form made available from staff.
2. The Head Start Director shall exhaust all means to resolve the grievance within three (3) working days. If the Director deems that he/she is unable to resolve the grievance, he/she will submit all pertinent documentation to the Clients Rights Committee.
3. The committee shall hold a hearing within twelve (12) working days of receipt of client's written grievance, giving duly written notice to clients within three (3) days of the hearing.
4. The client may seek legal counsel at no expense to the program. Claimant has the right to present testimony and bring forth witnesses.
5. The program, as respondent, reserves the right to seek legal counsel from the County's legal department, produce records to substantiate and support its hearing presentation, including the testimony of staff/volunteers and participants.
6. The committee chairperson shall present the findings of the hearing, along with recommendations to the Head Starts Director, within five (5) working days.
7. The Head Start Director shall issue the decision within three (3) working days of receipt of Committee recommendations. The claimant and the Chairman of the committee shall receive written notice of this action.
8. If the clients(s) is/are not satisfied with the decision, a period not to exceed five (5) working days is given to allow client to present written complaint to the Commissioners Court.
9. The Commissioners Court shall review the committee's recommendations and the decision of the Head Start Director under executive session at the next regular board meeting and make a final decision for the program.
10. All decisions made by the Commissioners Court are final for internal purposes of the Program. The client(s) shall seek outside legal recourse if the board's decision is not deemed as fair or satisfactory to the client(s).

**Hearing Format:**

Parliamentary procedures shall be adhered to in the hearing process. A quorum of five (5) members will be required to initiate the hearing. The claimant legal representative and witnesses shall be given an opportunity to present their testimony and/or records, documents

and other written evidence. The respondent(s) shall be given an opportunity to present their testimony from staff, volunteers, participants, including program records and files relevant to the case.

After both parties have made their presentations, the committee shall privately review all of the information, testimony and evidence to render a decision by majority of vote for its recommendation.

The Committee Chairperson shall give oral notice to both parties of its recommendations, which shall be forwarded in a written form to the Head Start Director for his/her decision. The Chairperson shall advise both parties of other resources as set out in the procedures.

A tape recorder shall be used for the entire hearing and minutes shall maintained as written record of hearing.

***Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50 (d)(2)(v)***

### **INTERNAL CONTROLS**

Webb County, the grantee agency, has an Audit Department, headed by the County Auditor, and a Treasury Department, headed by the County Treasurer. These departments ensure that all funds are safeguarded with the appropriate fiscal procedures and accounting principles.

***Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50 (g)(2) and 45 CFR 1301.13***

### **ANNUAL INDEPENDENT AUDIT**

Head Start will adhere to the following procedures for conducting the annual audit of the Head Start Program.

1. An annual independent audit is performed by an independent accounting firm.
2. The auditors(s)/accounting firm is procured by request for proposal, Negotiations pursuant to proposals, and extensions of the original contract as recommended by the County Auditors and approve by the Commissioners Court. This is based on the Texas Government Code Section 262.024(a)(4) "Exemptions".
3. All firms are subject to a quality review as per standards of the American Institute of Certified Public Accounts and the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants.
4. Funding is budgeted and provided on a proportionate basis by all funds audited.



5. All audit reports are prepared as per the fund requirements, i.e., the Single Audit Act of 1984 and the provisions of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular a-128, Audits of State and Local Governments.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(ix) and 45 CFR 1301.12*

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY  
AND PROCEDURES DESCRIBING HOW  
THE COMMISSIONERS COURT AND THE POLICY COUNCIL WILL  
IMPLEMENT SHARED DECISION-MAKING**

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50(g)(1)*

**HONERABLE WEBB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT AND  
HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL**

**INTRODUCTION**

Webb County, acting through its Commissioners Court, which serves as the Governing Body for the Head Start Program, has established, approved and implemented written procedures describing the roles and responsibilities of the Governing Body for governance and management and procedures describing how the Governing Body and the Policy Council will implement shared decision-making pursuant to the rules and regulations promulgated under 45 CFR 1304.50(g)(1), as authorized by 42 U.S.C. 9801, *et seq.*, in order to continue to ensure that Head Start is a high quality program for children and families that are served.

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**WEBB COUNTY JUDGE / DATE**

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**POLICY COUNCIL CHAIR / DATE**

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY  
AND PROCEDURES FOR SHARED DECISION-MAKING BETWEEN  
THE GOVERNING BODY AND THE POLICY COUNCIL**

**KEY DEFINITIONS AS USED IN CHART**

**A = General Responsibilities:** The group with legal and fiscal responsibility that guides and oversees the carrying out of the functions described through the individual or group given operating responsibility.

**B = Operating Responsibilities:** The individual or group that is directly responsible for carrying out or performing the functions consistent with the general guidance and oversight from the group holding general responsibility.

**C = Must Approve or Disapprove:** The group that may be involved in the decision-making process prior to the point of seeking approval. If it does not approve, a proposal cannot be adopted, or the proposed action taken, until agreement is reached between the disagreeing groups.

FUNCTION	GRANTEE AGENCY		Grantee MANAGEMENT STAFF
	Governing Body	Policy Council	Head Start Program Director
<b>I. Planning</b>			
Procedure for program planning 45 CFR 1305.3 and 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(iii)	A & C	C	B
The program's philosophy and long- and short-range program goals and objectives 45 CFR 1304.51(a) and 45 CFR 1305.3 and 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(iv)	A & C	C	B
Criteria for defining recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities 45 CFR part 1305 and 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(vii)	A	C	B
All funding applications and amendments to funding applications for Head Start, including administration services, prior to the admission of such applications to HHS. 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(i)	A & C	C	B

<p>Policy Council, Policy Committee, and Parent Committee reimbursement, Grantee agency must enable low-income members to participate fully in their group responsibilities by providing, if necessary, reimbursements for reasonable expenses incurred by the members.</p> <p>45 CFR 1304.50(f)</p>	A	C	B
<p>The annual self-assessment of the grantee agency's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal intent of its grant application, concluding planning or other actions that may result from the review of the annual audit and findings from the Federal monitoring review.</p> <p>45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(vii)</p>	A	C	B
<b>II. General Procedures</b>	<b>Governing Body</b>	<b>Policy Council</b>	<b>Head Start Director</b>
<p>The composition of the Policy Council or the Policy Committee and the procedures by which policy group members are chosen.</p> <p>45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(vi)</p>	A & C	C	B
<p>Grantee and delegate agencies must have written policies that define the roles and responsibilities of the governing body members and that inform them of the management procedures and functions necessary to implement a high quality program.</p> <p>45 CFR 1304.50(g)(1)</p>	A & C	-----	-----
<p>Procedures describing how the governing body and the appropriate policy group will implement shared decision-making.</p> <p>45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(ii)</p>	A & C	C	<u>*B</u>
<p>Internal dispute resolution. Each grantee and delegate agency and Policy Council or Policy Committee jointly must establish written procedures for resolving internal disputes, including impasse procedures, between the governing body and policy group.</p> <p>45 CFR 1304.50(h)</p>	A & C	C	<u>*B</u>

Establish and maintain procedures for hearing and working with the grantee or delegate agency to resolve community complaints about the program.  45 CFR 1304.50(d)(2)*v)	B	B	<u>*A</u>
Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that appropriate internal controls are established and implemented to safeguard Federal funds.  45 CFR 1304.50(g)(2) and 45 CFR 1301.13	A	-----	<u>*B</u>
The annual independent audit that must be conducted in accordance with 45 CFR 1301.12. 45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(ix)	A	-----	-----
<b>III. Human Resources Management</b>	<b>Governing Body</b>	<b>Policy Council</b>	<b>Head Start Director</b>
Program personnel policies and subsequent changes to those policies, including standards of conduct for program staff, consultants, and volunteers.  45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(x) and 45 CFR 1301.31	A & C	C	<u>*B</u>
Decisions to hire or terminate the Head Start Director of the grantee agency.  45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(xi)	A & C	C	-----
Decisions to hire or terminate any person who works primarily for the Head Start program of the grantee agency.  45 CFR 1304.50(d)(1)(xii)	A	C	B

\*The responsibilities that are underlined have been determined locally by the governing body.

*Pursuant to 45 CFR 1304.50(g)(1)*