



Program Management and Quality Improvement Plan

In an effort to promote compliance with standards and regulations and to improve the quality of services, UCHRA Van Buren Head Start uses data from the following sources to update its planning and practices: community assessment, PIR, child and family outcomes, ongoing monitoring and assessment, evaluations. The data collected from the individual data sources collectively make up the Self Assessment and Strategic System. Long range goals and annual short term objectives as established in the five year grant process devised from the outcomes identified in the Self Assessment. Planning is a recurrent process, integrated into ongoing program operation, with planning activities occurring in an annual cycle, consistent with the Office of Head Start refunding system. Planning is not completed in seclusion, but includes information and involvement from a variety of sources to include parents, staff, and community partners. Input and feedback is obtained through small and large group meetings such as Policy Council, Board of Directors, Advisory Committees, as a formalized method of discussion and is also gained from in less formal settings such as staff and parent meetings, and meetings with community partners. Plans are working documents and are modified and updated as regulations and requirements change or in response to the needs of our Head Start children and families.

A systematic approach ensures fiscal and human resource management. Under the umbrella of the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency, Head Start Employees must adhere to the policies established by the Grantee in conjunction with additional Office of Head Start performance standards and Tennessee licensing requirements. Yearly staff job evaluations and self evaluations support a system of professional development. Staffing patterns and projected budget expenses allow for staff to meet the goals of their individual professional development plans through a goal setting process identified from staff needs and interest to include projected costs to meet those goals. Hours must be included and identified when developing a budget around training, professional development, and salaries.

Financial reports and invoices are prepared on a monthly basis. Once all financial activity for a month is balanced and posted to the general ledger, each program's general ledger, specified by program number, is printed and used to prepare monthly/year- to-date financial reports and invoices for each contract. The Finance Director is responsible for ensuring all financial reports and invoices are accurate and submitted on a timely basis. Copies of all reports, invoices, and relating documentation will be kept on file in the finance department. Copies will also be given to the Program Directors. The Finance Director and Program Directors are responsible for reviewing the financial reports periodically to ensure spending is consistent and the Agency is at no risk of deficit spending within the programs.

UCHRA Van Buren County Head Start provides for ongoing training and assistance for all staff, consultants and volunteers engaged in the delivery of program service. All Staff are provided opportunities to expand on current skills and knowledge base ensuring competencies to perform the roles and responsibilities of their position, focusing on areas of quality teaching and learning and service delivery.

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Utilizing the information collected from the Community Assessment program options are determined and individualized service delivery is implemented to meet the needs of the children and families served by the program, to include services to dual language learners and children with a disability when applicable and as indicated. Resources are identified, materials are translated and made available and multilingual staff are hired.

The program maintains multiple systems for the purpose of data collection. Procedures are in place that indicate what reports are collected, identifying the individual to collect and the purpose of the collection ie. data collection for analysis, tracking, verification, etc. The program utilizes multiple web based systems allowing for accessibility of all staff. Costs are included in the process for determining which electronic data collection programs will be used by the program and staff. Effectiveness of data collected determines the continuation of the use of specified electronic data collection systems. Systems are backed up on a regular basis. Program implements a real time approach for the use of the data ensuring that all staff have access to information with no lag time delays. The management of program data is maintained in a secure and effective manner allowing for sharing of data for staff to access and achieve the goals of the program, protecting the privacy of the child's records.

The program provides services for low-income, preschool children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, with the necessary support services to include a full range of activities and services normally provided to all Head Start children and provisions for any modifications necessary to meet the special needs of children with disabilities.

The Board of Directors and the Policy Council have approved the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency Personnel Policies & Procedures, supplemented by specific Head Start policies. Copies of the Personnel Manual are available to all employees and signed statements of their received confirmation are retained in individual personnel files. Copies of Personnel Policies are also maintained through an electronic system and available at all times to all employees.

The Grantee has developed and adopted Head Start Hiring and Firing Policies and Procedures, which comply with Head Start Performance Standard requirements. The Grantee must ensure that only candidates with the qualifications specified in the performance standards and Head Start Act are hired. Staff and consultants must have the knowledge, skills, and experience they need to perform their assigned functions, and reduce staff turnover. Efforts are made to hire and maintain staff with cultural and racial characteristics of the families served. Program will obtain staff or volunteers that speak the language of the families served. The governing board and the Policy Council approval are required in reference to these policies and procedures. Grantee contracts include provisions requiring compliance with Civil Rights, Equal Employment, ADA, and legislative and administrative regulations. The Head Start Director is responsible for designing Head Start positions and recommending salaries consistent with the agency's personnel system/pay scale and Head Start policies, budgets and yearly wage comp study. Current job descriptions are maintained in the Head Start personnel records, and are dated and signed by each staff member.

The Head Start Director is responsible for the review of Federal Head Start administrative regulations, instructions, policy issuances, etc., & for periodic review of these to assure that local policies, procedures, and practices are in compliance. (S)he is responsible for communicating this information to Head Start staff, Policy Council, Grantee Administration & the Governing

Board. When new policy instructions/regulations are received from the Regional Office, (s)he reviews them in view of local policies and practices, and if action is required, (s)he calls it to the attention of the Council and others who would be involved in making any necessary changes. Routinely, a review of these policies and regulations is made at least annually, as a part of the self-assessment process and program planning process for the following year. Any needed changes are formulated by the Head Start Director, and other appropriate persons depending on the nature of the changes and submitted to the Council for approval when changes are significant. The changes in wording will not be considered for approval. The Governing Board and Grantee Administration are kept aware of major changes affecting the day to day operations of Head Start; they then become part of the operating plan and their implementation is reflected in training, monitoring and program assessment documentation.

Head Start program that meets the needs of the children and families in Van Buren County and operates in full compliance must develop, implement, and sustain an effective system for program planning that is systematic, comprehensive and ongoing. Advancement related to Head Start activities will be reported to stakeholders verbally or by written reports. Established program objectives include activities and documentation that support governing regulations, such as Head Start Performance Standards, 2007 Head Start Act, state child care licensing, transportation, and health/safety requirements, staff qualification, training requirements and child and family service delivery system through timelines, targets, and effective completion. Financial objectives include activities and documentation as to compliance status in relation to Head Start federal, state, and local fiscal regulations and policies/procedures; budget planning procurement and payment, monitoring of actual financial expenditures and financial reporting to programs managers, policy groups, and annual audit activities and report completion. Long range goals established are as follows: Show systematic progress towards meeting established school readiness goals for preschoolers, to increase parent, family, and community engagement in program activities leading to improved family engagement outcomes, Show systematic progress toward increased parent, family, community awareness related to the correlation between healthy children and learning. Through the data collection system designed during the first year each of long range goals will show an increased knowledge base and logic.

The objective of the Self-Assessment is for the program to determine areas/items that need improvement or recommendations to strengthen current practices to enable staff to better achieve the program goals and provide high quality service to children and families. Each service area is carefully examined and the outcome is analyzed. These findings and /or recommendations identify areas that need improvement and are incorporated into the T/TA Plan and Strategic Plan. A QIP plan is developed to improve the areas identified. Although the program continually seeks ways to improve program service delivery and program design and management, the accountability of the self assessment process allows for an unbiased view of program operations.

Program will submit status reports to the governing body and policy council at a minimum of twice yearly. Reports will be submitted to HHS immediately related to incidents affecting the health and safety of the program, financial viability of the breaches of personally identifiable information, or program involvement in legal proceedings and all required notification by the state and local authorities.

An annual report will be published and disseminated to all stakeholders at meetings of the governing body, published on the website and made available at public events such as Head Start Health and Education annual Fair, County Fair, etc.