

Frequently Asked Questions about Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships

Questions about the Initiative

1. What is the Early Head Start – Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership program?

The EHS-CC Partnership is a new competitive grant opportunity to support the partnering of Early Head Start (EHS) programs with child care providers to expand the number of high-quality slots for infants and toddlers. New or existing EHS grantees will partner with local center-based and family child care providers and, through activities including training and technical assistance, management, and the delivery of comprehensive services, support them in meeting the Early Head Start Program Performance Standards.

2. What is the Project Period for the FY 2014 funds?

Successful applicants will be awarded a five year grant with an initial project period of 9-11 months. Subsequent project periods would be 12 months each. If additional funds beyond \$500 million are appropriated to support the partnerships in FY 2015, ACF would consider expanding to additional applicants.

3. How will funding be allocated across state, AIAN, Migrant and Territories?

The Administration anticipates a robust nationwide competition, including territories and tribes. Funding will be available within each state based on the number of young children in poverty and no less than 3% and 4.5% of total funds will be available for American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start programs and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs, respectively. *However, only high quality applications will be funded. Priority will be for applicants proposing EHS-CC partnerships and ensuring continuity of services for children who are served.* HHS may reallocate funds in order to achieve this.

4. What benefits will children in EHS-CC partnerships receive?

Children served in an EHS-CC partnership will receive the comprehensive education, health, development, and family support services required under EHS, and benefit from high-quality services that meet EHS standards.

5. How will 3 year olds be served in this initiative?

The FY 2014 appropriations language allows the \$500 million for the EHS-CC partnerships to serve children *through* age 3. Family child care providers are designed to serve mixed age groups and the family child care Head Start standards are written to seamlessly accommodate children birth to five. However Head Start standards for Center-based programs are significantly different for children up to age 3 and 3 year olds. As such, EHS-CC partnership funding will be available for children birth through age 2 in center-based settings but also will be available for 3 year olds to be served in family child care settings. All applicants must propose a plan to provide seamless transitions to Head Start, pre-K, or other preschool settings.

6. Must a child have a Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidy in order to be eligible?

A child does not need a child care subsidy and does not have to be CCDF-eligible to be eligible for an EHS-CC partnership slot. However, applicants must demonstrate how they are layering funding from other sources including child care subsidies.

Questions about the Application Process

1. Who is eligible to apply for this grant program?

All entities eligible to apply for EHS funds can apply for the EHS-CC Partnership funds, including tribes and territories. Eligible entities include community organizations, non-profit or for profit organizations, state, local and tribal governments, schools, and existing Head Start or Early Head Start grantees.

2. How do I apply for funding?

ACF will release a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) in mid-spring 2014. The FOA will spell out explicitly what is required in the partnership and in the application. Prior to the release of the FOA, interested eligible applicants should consider reaching out to potential partners and begin to work together to develop a plan so they are ready when the FOA is announced.

3. Can an existing Early Head Start grantee use these funds to expand their number of slots, or is an applicant required to partner with child care?

The FOA will give strong competitive priority to applicants who propose EHS-CC partnerships. Applicants may still apply to receive Early Head Start slots without partnerships. An EHS-CC Partnership applicant may be an existing Early Head Start grantee or any other eligible entity proposing to become an EHS-CC Partnership grantee through this funding opportunity.

4. Will alignment with other federal, state, or locally funded early childhood development programs (e.g. Pre-K, home visiting, Head Start, other preschool programs) be prioritized?

Applicants should demonstrate strong alignment with other federally, State or locally funded early childhood development programs, such as home visiting, Head Start, or state funded Pre-K.

5. Will Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership funding be targeted to areas of high poverty?

Applicants who propose to fill most of their funded EHS-CC partnership slots with children from zip codes of concentrated poverty will be at a competitive advantage. A list of high-poverty concentration zip codes will be included in the FOA.

6. Do programs have to be regulated to be eligible for a partnership?

Yes, regardless of State exemptions, all partners must be regulated. The term “regulated” means a provider who meets state-established health and safety standards and is subject to monitoring. Self-certification by the provider without documentation or verification is not sufficient.

7. Can partnerships be within one entity or does a partner have to be two separate entities?

Partnerships may be within one entity, under the condition that the applicant identifies partner child care centers or family child care homes.

8. What does partnership mean when an existing child care program applies and then becomes an Early Head Start grantee? In this case, who are the partners?

If an entity applies to be an Early Head Start grantee, without proposing to partner with local child care sites, this would be considered a new grant to expand Early Head Start, rather than a partnership. If the entity applies to be an Early Head Start grantee with additional child care site partners, this would be a partnership.

9. Will the partnership grantees need to provide a match for these new funds?

A non-federal match of 20% is established by law. Partnership grantees can request a waiver for all or part of the match if they cannot meet the non-federal match required of Head Start programs.

10. What is the minimum number of child slots for each partnership?

Although ACF is not setting a minimum number of slots for which applicants can apply, ACF recommends applicants propose no less than 72 slots, which can be allocated across multiple partner sites. The goal of this recommendation is to ensure that partnerships are of sufficient size to support provision of both comprehensive and cost effective services. ACF recognizes that applicants in rural communities, or organizations with existing infrastructure to support the necessary services, may propose less than 72 slots.

11. Do specific child care partner sites have to be identified in the application?

Applicants are encouraged to identify their partners in their application. If it is not possible to identify all of the partner sites in a partnership, the applicant may provide a detailed plan and timeline for identifying partners.

Questions about Program Implementation

1. Will there be a different monitoring protocol for partnerships?

EHS-CC partnership monitoring will be in accordance with the Head Start monitoring protocol, with minor modifications. Ongoing oversight and intensive technical assistance will be provided to all grantees during the first 18 months of the grant award to ensure appropriate implementation of the program. The formal monitoring process and Designation Renewal System (DRS), however, will not take place until after the first 18 months of the grant.

2. What services will a child receive in an EHS-CC Partnership slot funded in a child care setting?

Children in EHS-CC partnership funded slots will receive all of the services children in the Early Head Start program receive. Applicants are highly encouraged to develop models – including with additional community partners or other funding streams – to ensure parity of service throughout their program, including children who are not directly funded through EHS-CC partnership funds.

3. Will the new initiative include EHS Home Based Option?

No, the EHS-CC Partnerships will not include Early Head Start home-based option (home visiting). It will only include the Early Head Start center-based and family child care options.

4. Family child care providers have their own set of regulations to follow and don't have to do everything centers do. How are they able to provide Early Head Start?

Family child care is an existing and successful Head Start model. EHS-CC Partnership grantees must ensure that all partner sites offer high quality programs and that the children enrolled receive all Early Head Start services regardless of the setting in which they are served. Though some requirements differ between family child care programs and center-based programs, most Early Head Start regulations apply to programs across settings. For more information on strong family child care models check out [*An Early Head Start for Family Child Care*](#).

5. What resources are available to help make partnerships work?

As part of the Office of Child Care and the Office of Head Start's ongoing efforts to support partnerships, there are several resources available that can help communities build and sustain partnerships. At this [link](#), there are tip sheets, technical assistance papers and lessons learned documents. Both offices provide extensive TA networks which will also be used to support this effort.

6. I am concerned about leveraging funds because I don't want to seem like I'm double dipping. How can I use EHS and child care funds to support partnerships?

EHS-CC partnerships will not "double-dip" because grantees will intentionally combine or layer EHS funding with CCDF funding in order to provide high-quality, comprehensive services to children. Grantees will be required to have budgets that reflect the multiple funding sources, and cost allocation plans to ensure that each funding source is used for allowable purposes without duplicate payment. Each funding source will be used for different parts of the program to ensure no duplicative payment. For example, an EHS-CC partnership might use one source for basic programming costs and another source for quality enhancements (e.g., training, equipment, supplies). Alternatively, a partnership might use one source for certain periods of time (e.g., core hours) and another source for other periods (e.g., before and after care). By combining funding sources, the EHS-CC partnerships will be able to increase the number of children receiving high quality services.

7. How can communities work together to ensure training opportunities exist for all providers in the community? I thought only EHS programs/staff could attend EHS training and professional development opportunities.

Many partners find that professional development is one of the key areas where they can successfully work together. There are many ways to do this. For example, partnerships can leverage CCDF-funded professional development registries and scholarships to support providers pursuing higher teacher qualifications to meet Early Head Start standards. Similarly, local Early Head Start training and technical assistance funds can be targeted to community providers to increase the pool of qualified professionals in the community who can serve children served in both Early Head Start and child care.

8. What does the typical contract with an Early Head Start and child care provider include?

The contract should clearly state the responsibilities and expectations of each entity and should include all the requirements for fully implementing all of Early Head Start's required services. There are sample contracts available on this [link](#) as well as on the National Association for Family Child Care [website](#).

9. I am concerned about implementing a curriculum and assessing children in a multi-age setting like family child care. How can that be done?

Grantees should work with families and teachers to review curriculum and assessment tools that are most appropriate for their setting. [The Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center \(ECLKC\)](#) has many resources available for selecting appropriate tools. There are also resources and training available through the Head Start National Centers available to Early Head Start grantees and their child care partners to support appropriate selection and implementation of curriculum and assessment across settings.

10. What are the next steps?

We held a series of technical assistance [webinars](#) aimed at providing helpful information to prospective grant applicants. In addition, we published an applicant support toolkit that can be accessed [here](#). The FOA will be released in mid-spring of 2014.