

Welcome to the Office of Head Start's pre-application recording. This recording is for any organization interested in submitting an application to provide Early Head Start services in Northeast Harris County, Texas under grant announcement HHS-2009-ACF-OHS-CH-R06-7002. This recording is designed to be used with the slide presentation.

The second slide lists our agenda for the pre-application recording today. Our agenda for this call is to:

- One, provide an overview of the replacement grantee process;
- Two, provide an overview of the grantee selection process;
- Three, review the request for applications and the evaluation criteria;
- Four, review the electronic application process known as Grants.gov, and
- Five, provide a process for asking questions and receiving answers.

It is important to know that the request for applications is also referred to as the RFA.

The information available for the Northeast Harris County, Texas Early Head Start program can be found on the web site where this transcript is located. The information available includes the PowerPoint slides that go with the recording; an information sheet indicating how the recording can be accessed; the Northeast Harris county service area fact sheet and inventory listing; and information pertaining to the HHS Poverty Guidelines for 2009. If you have trouble accessing this information, please contact the ACYF Operations Center by telephone at 1-866-796-1591.

Slide number 3 provides an overview of the replacement grantee process. Slide number 4 provides a timeline showing each step in the process, which we will now discuss.

A replacement grantee for a specific service area is needed when a Head Start or Early Head Start grant is terminated or relinquished.

To select a replacement grantee, the Office of Head Start first develops and then issues a RFA or Request for Applications to announce the availability of funds for the specific area. The RFAs are typically posted for a 60 day period. Additional fact sheets and inventory listings are created to distribute to potential applicants.

We then conduct a panel review of all eligible applications within 30 days of the application due date. If an applicant submits a fundable application, the OHS and Regional Office will conduct a site visit to learn more about the corporate capacity and viability of the organization in the specified service area. This visit usually takes place within 60 days of the panel review.

Based on the panel review comments, the site visit, and the application, the OHS submits a letter to the Governor announcing the proposed grantee selection. What follows is a 45 day period for comment from the Governor.

Final documents about the decision to fund an applicant are issued approximately 10 months into the replacement grantee process. Another 30 days are allotted for negotiations with the selected grantee. The local Congressional delegation is notified by OHS of the award 72 hours before the new grant award is publically announced.

As you can see, the replacement grantee process involves numerous steps. From the date the RFA is first published, the selection process typically takes approximately 10 to 12 months to complete. Successful applicants will be notified once a selection has been made. Unsuccessful applicants will also be notified in writing.

Slide number 5 begins the discussion about the selection process. It reminds potential applicants for the Northeast Harris County Early Head Start service area that applications must be received by April 20, 2009 at 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time. Applications not received by the date and time specified will be disqualified and not reviewed. Late applications will be returned to the applicant.

Applications that are mailed or hand delivered must arrive at the official receipt point by the due date and time. The official receipt point is the: ACYF Operations Center, 118 Q Street, North East, Washington, DC 20002-2132, to the attention of Tanyanic Brown. The toll free telephone number for the ACYF Operations Center is 866-796-1591.

Slide number 6 continues the selection process discussion. Applicants are asked to mark the envelopes of hardcopy submissions with the name

of the review. In this instance, it should read “Northeast Harris County, Texas Early Head Start Replacement”.

Applications will be reviewed by an independent panel of non-federal reviewers in Washington, DC. The independent panel review is comprised of four individuals: three reviewers and one panel chair. The panel thoroughly reviews each application using the evaluation criteria listed in the RFA.

The Office of Head Start oversees the panel review and determines if applications should be considered for funding.

The Office of Head Start reviews all other relevant information regarding the applicant, such as past history and organizational performance, or any other information that verifies an agency’s corporate capacity and viability to operate as a Head Start or Early Head Start grantee.

Slide number 7 focuses on the types of organizations that may be eligible to be a replacement grantee. A complete listing can be found in the RFA. Eligible Applicants are any local public or private non-profit, or any local for-profit agency or organization in the community to be served. This includes faith-based organizations.

For-profit agencies must agree to waive their fee or profit.

All organizations must submit with their application proof of legal or corporate status.

Slide number 8 indicates that eligible applicants must provide evidence in this application of financial capability. Eligible applicants must demonstrate the financial viability to meet the requirements of 45 Code of Federal Regulations 1301.1 and 1302.2. Financial viability means the capability of an applicant or the continuing capability of a grantee to furnish the non-Federal share of the cost of operating an appropriate or approved Head Start program.

Slide number 9 reiterates the service area and funded enrollment of this specific program announcement. The service area covered is Northeast Harris County, Texas. A description of the service area’s boundaries can be found in the program announcement. The funded enrollment for the

area served by the previous Early Head Start grantee includes 66 children ages zero to 3 and their families.

Slides number 10 and 11 discuss the project period and funding amount available under this program announcement. The initial project period and budget is for a one-year period. The continuation of funding is subject to the availability of funds, which is based on the satisfactory performance of the grantee. Grantee performance is subject to review after the first year of operation.

The total funding available from the Office of Head Start for an Early Head Start program in Northeast Harris County is \$680,521. This funding includes the base funding and technical assistance funds.

The non-federal match of 20 percent is equal to \$170,130. Each applicant must describe in the budget and budget justification section of the application their proposed non-federal match.

Slide number 12 discusses application disqualification factors. There are three disqualification factors for replacement grant applications. Applications that are disqualified are not reviewed.

The first disqualification factor involves the funding amount requested. The ceiling amount is the amount specified in the RFA. Applications exceeding that dollar amount for the base year period will be disqualified. This does not include any additional request for start-up funds, which must be noted separately.

The second disqualification factor involves the application due date. Applications not received by the date and time published in the RFA will be disqualified.

The third disqualification factor reflects the limited eligibility requirements of this announcement. Applications that do not meet the limited eligibility requirements of the announcement will be disqualified and not reviewed. The limited eligibility requirement for this announcement is Northeast Harris County, Texas.

Slides number 13, 14 and 15 highlight some of the laws, regulations, and policies governing the Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Of

primary importance is the recent Head Start Reauthorization, Public Law 110-134, The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007, which is available online at the web sites listed in the RFA.

The RFA also lists web sites where the Code of Federal Regulations relevant to the Head Start program can be found, as well as the web sites where relevant Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circulars can be located.

An organization submitting an application for Head Start or Early Head Start grants should become familiar with these legal documents.

The administrative requirements for Head Start Programs vary depending on the type of organization. State and Local Governments should review OMB Circular A-102, which has been codified by the Department of Health and Human Service (DHHS) in 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 92.

Non-profit organizations, including institutions of higher education and hospitals, should review OMB Circular A-110, which has been codified by DHHS in 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 74.

For-Profit organizations should become familiar with 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 74, Subpart E.

The Cost and Accounting Principles Head Start and Early Head Start grantees must follow also vary depending on the type of organization.

Educational Institutions should become familiar with OMB Circular A-21, State and Local Governments should use OMB Circular A-87, Other Non-Profit Organizations should review OMB Circular A-122, and Commercial Organizations should become familiar with 48 Code of Federal Regulations Part 31.

Slide number 16 lists some of the most important web sites where information necessary to successfully operating and managing a Head Start and Early Head Start program can be found. These web sites are also listed in the RFA.

Slide number 17 begins a discussion about the information found in the Request for Applications, or RFA. The slide lists the ACF web site where the RFA can be found. Announcements can also be accessed through the Grants.gov web site.

Applicants are advised to read each RFA carefully. The terms, conditions, and evaluation criteria have changed, particularly in light of the new Head Start reauthorization.

Slides number 18 through 22 discuss application format and required documents. The narrative section of the application must be double-spaced, and is limited to a length of 100 pages. The narrative's 100 pages should include the abstract, budget pages, and budget justification text.

Up to an additional 100 pages of appendices and resumes will be accepted.

The contractor will remove anything over each section's page limit before the applications are disseminated to the panel for review. If a part of the application is missing, then points will be deducted by the review panel. It is important to include information specific to the evaluation criteria and be concise in your description.

The RFA describes the desired ordering of application materials. This ordering is as follows: the three Standard 424 Forms, followed by the Table of Contents. The narrative page count begins with the Program Abstract, which is followed by the Objectives and Need for Assistance, Approach, Staff and Position Data, Organizational Profiles, and the detailed Budget and Budget Justification. Finally, up to 100 pages of supplemental materials may be placed in the Appendices. Please clearly label the beginning of each section.

A complete listing of information that must be included in the application is in the checklist in the RFA. Items that should be provided in the appendices include personnel policies and procedures, resumes of key staff in the organization and proposed Head Start program, third-party agreements, letters of support, and proof of existing Policy Council approval of the grant application if the applicant is a current grantee.

Personnel policies and procedures may be submitted in whole or in part. Key staff include the CEO, CFO, Executive Director, Early Head Start Director, and content specialists.

With slide number 23, we begin to discuss the evaluation criteria. Please note that the evaluation criteria has been recently modified to reflect new language and requirements as found in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.

There are 5 evaluation criterion under this announcement valued at a total of 100 points.

Criterion 1—Objectives and Need for Assistance, is worth 10 points.

Criterion 2—Approach, is worth 35 points.

Criterion 3—Staff and Position Data, is worth 15 points.

Criterion 4—Organizational Profiles, is worth 20 points, and

Criterion 5—Budget and Budget Justification, is worth 20 points.

It is important for applicants to read the criteria very carefully and be responsive to all the information that is requested.

Slide number 23 reviews Criterion 1, Objective and Need for Assistance. In this section of the application, an applicant should clearly indicate the proposed service area to be covered; describe the proposed service area's demographics, as well as the greatest needs of the population as it relates to Head Start or Early Head Start. The applicant should provide evidence of community support, and provide the results of an assessment of need. The applicant should also present a plan to be fully operational within 30 days of a grant award.

Applicants should realize that once an award is made, the OHS with the Regional Office and the interim contractor will work with the new replacement grantee to develop a final transition plan to become fully operational.

The next slide, number 24, is the first of several slides reviewing Criterion 2, Approach, which is worth 35 points.

In this section of the application, an applicant will describe how comprehensive high quality services for children and families will be provided to prepare children to succeed in school. This section will

describe how educational services that use scientifically valid curricula and teaching practices, and that are developmentally appropriate will be provided; and how Health and Mental Health services, Nutritional services, and Social services will be provided.

It will also indicate how the proposed program design and approach are responsive to the needs of the community, particularly in terms of the number of days, hours, and weeks the program will be provided, and describe the organization's ability to meet program governance requirements as described in the Head Start Act.

Slide number 25 continues the review of items to include in the Approach section of an application. This section should describe plans to coordinate services with public and private entities that are willing to commit resources to assist the program. Examples of other entities include state pre-kindergarten programs, Early Reading First and Even Start programs, and other child care and preschool programs. The description should include a plan to offer referral to local entities.

Slide number 26 continues to discuss items to include in the Approach section. The application should describe how children and families will be recruited and selected for participation in the program, including children with disabilities, homeless children, children in foster care, and limited English proficient children. It should describe plans for implementing best practices in terms of child-to-teacher ratios and family service worker caseloads, and it should describe a plan to meet the needs of limited English proficient children and their families.

Slides number 27 and 28 also review items to discuss in the Approach section. This section of an application should describe a plan for facilitating parental involvement in the education of their children, discuss plans for working with parents in the areas of literacy, parenting skills, substance abuse counseling, and, if needed, include information on the effects of drug exposure on infants and fetal alcohol syndrome. The applicant should also describe plans for outreach and strengthening the role of fathers. The Approach section should also discuss how the proposed organizational structure supports the proposed program. This includes describing how key management functions will be assigned, how content area expertise will be determined and assigned, and how overall management will be conducted. Finally, describe in this section of

the application the existing ability within the organization to perform recordkeeping, reporting, self-assessments, internal and external communications, and internal and external monitoring.

Please read the RFA carefully for more detailed information.

Slide number 29 reviews the Staffing and Position Data section of the application, which is worth 15 points. In this section, an applicant should discuss the qualifications and experience of the organization's staff. It should provide a clear plan for reviewing qualifications of currently employed HS or EHS staff and the employment decision-making process, detail plans for recruiting and retaining qualified staff who are capable of implementing a high quality, comprehensive program, demonstrate that the proposed program director and key staff are qualified and knowledgeable about HS regulations and standards, and describe organizational procedures for staff professional development, supervision, and evaluation.

Slide number 30 moves into a review of the Organizational Profile section of the application, which is worth 20 points. In this section, an applicant should demonstrate the capability to implement Early Head Start services in the community and the ability to sustain the program. An applicant should present the proposed organizational structure and clear lines of responsibility, include any past experience the organization has in the management of a program of this size and scope, and present past performance in providing services comparable to Head Start or Early Head Start, if applicable. An applicant should also provide details about the local community that demonstrates its role, history and experience in the community.

Slides number 31 and 32 continue to discuss the Organizational Profile section. The organizational profile should also provide details about activities during the transition period, discuss classroom availability, how transportation will be managed, and the applicant's ability to recruit and select children. It should detail the plans for, and the ability of, Senior Management in the organization to: exercise effective oversight of program operations and accountability for Federal funds; include the Policy Council in the planning and decision-making process; assure representation of the diverse community being served; set and monitor overall agency priorities and systems; and conduct community

assessments, self assessments, ongoing monitoring, and outcome based evaluations.

Slide number 33 is the first of many slides reviewing the information that should be included in the Budget and Budget Justification sections of the application. Applicants should provide a budget detailing the line item costs that will support their proposed approach, and explain in a narrative how costs were estimated. Budget line items must clearly provide required comprehensive services. If combining with other funding streams, the narrative should describe the tracking system for managing, accounting for, and allocating Head Start or Early Head Start funds. Applicants must also provide details about how Head Start or Early Head Start funds will be tracked and managed with the use of strong fiscal controls.

Slide number 34 continues to discuss the budget section. The budget narrative should include a discussion about how the 15% limitation on development and administrative costs will be met. A waiver of this requirement may be available to applicants; additional details about obtaining a waiver can be found on the information web sites listed in the RFA. The budget section must also describe the dollar amount and process for contributing the non-federal share of the total project cost.

A separate budget covering start-up costs is discussed on slide number 35. If a start-up budget is requested, the reason for needing additional funding must be described and justified. It must be a separate budget from the on-going operational budget, it must use a second set of budget forms, it must be reasonable, and it will be counted in the 100 page limit. Please note: start-up funding can only be awarded if requested in an applicant's original proposal.

The next 4 slides list the expected line items in a program budget. Additional details about each line item can be found in the RFA. If a budget line item is not applicable for your program, please indicate that in the application. Items that may be included are: Personnel Costs; Fringe Benefits; Travel; Equipment; Supplies; Contractual Services; Construction; Other, and Indirect Costs.

Slide number 40 introduces Grants.gov. This is the web site used to submit grant applications electronically. Submitting an application electronically is not a requirement—it is an option.

If your organization has not submitted an application through Grants.gov before, be aware that it may take up to a full week to get the set-up completely done. Applications received through Grants.gov are date and time stamped by the computer program. Applications not received by the specified due date and time will be disqualified. Upon submission of an application through Grants.gov, an applicant will receive an automatic e-mail acknowledgement of the submission, with a Grants.gov tracking number.

Slide number 41 continues to discuss the electronic submission process. The process includes downloading the free Pure Edge viewer software, completing several online forms, and then submitting. User friendly error and correction messages will be received, if necessary, during the process. Completing the online forms is required before an applicant is fully registered. Being fully registered gives an applicant an electronic signature and permits you to use Grants.gov.

Slides number 42 and 43 provide additional information about the electronic submission process. A link to a helpful checklist on the Grants.gov web site is provided on slide number 42. This web site link is also listed in the RFA. This slide also lists one of two important steps for submitting an application electronically – the obtaining of a Dun and Bradstreet number. Additional details, such as the toll free number to call for a DUNs number, can be found in the RFA.

Slide 43 discusses the Central Contractor Registry, and the steps for becoming registered. Part of the initial set-up registration period in Grants.gov is taken by the Central Contractor Registry, or CCR. It is important to note that becoming registered in the CCR may take up to 3 business days, and it must be renewed annually.

Slide 44 provides a toll-free number for calling Grants.gov for additional information. The toll free number is 1-800-518-4726. The Grants.gov Help desk can also be reached online at [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). This information is also found in the RFA. Please call the toll free number or use the online address for any questions regarding Grants.gov. If you

call the ACYF Operations Center with Grants.gov questions, they will direct you to these resources.

The final slide, number 45, provides the ACYF Operations Center e-mail address and toll free number. If you have any questions after listening to this recording, please contact the ACYF Operations Center at 1-866-796-1591 or by e-mail at [OHS@dixongroup.com](mailto:OHS@dixongroup.com) .

All questions will be forwarded to the Office of Head Start for a response.

A summary of all responses will be posted to this web site.

This now concludes this recording. Thank you for your participation and interest in Head Start and Early Head Start.