

Governance, Leadership, and Oversight Capacity Screener

Introduction

Organizations that accept federal funds to operate Head Start and/or Early Head Start programs must have strong governance systems in place to safeguard federal dollars and provide oversight and direction to the Head Start program.

This screener organizes the Head Start requirements to help organizations identify where they need to make changes and build capacity to fulfill their Head Start governance responsibilities.

Suggestions for Use

1. Print a copy of this screener.
2. Have your organization's governing body or Tribal Council chair, Policy Council chair, executive director, and Head Start program director work together to review the table beginning on page 3 and to identify (with a check mark or "X") the following items:
 - i. Required Head Start governance practices that your organization currently has in place
 - ii. Required Head Start governance practices that your organization will implement within the first three months of funding
 - iii. Required Head Start governance practices that your organization needs help understanding and implementing
3. On the final page of this document list the governance practices and regulations that your organization needs assistance in understanding and implementing.
4. Enter any questions or concerns you have in the comments section on the final page of this document.
5. Share this screener and your findings with your full governing body or Tribal Council, Policy Council, and Head Start program leadership. Assign people to begin implementation of the governance practices you have identified as not currently in place.
6. You can explore the [Organizational Leadership](#) page on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) to access other resources that can assist you as you move your governance system and practices forward.
7. At your next meeting with Regional Office staff, discuss those governance practices and regulations where your organization may benefit from technical assistance.



Head Start Governance, Leadership, and Oversight Capacity Screener

Head Start Governance Practices and Related Regulations	Practice/Procedure is currently in place	Practice/Procedure will be fully implemented within first three months of funding	Our organization needs assistance in understanding and implementing this regulation
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1. The governing body (or Tribal Council) has the required composition.¹ Head Start Act Sec. 642(c)(1)(B) (i-iv)

- At least one member has fiscal/accounting background and expertise
- At least one member has early childhood education and development background and expertise
- At least one member is a licensed attorney
- Members reflect the community served and include parents of children who are currently, or were formerly, enrolled in Head Start programs

2. The Policy Council has the required composition. Head Start Act Sec. 642(c)(2)(B)(i) Sec. 642(c)(2)(B)(ii)(I-II)

- A majority are parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start program (including delegate agencies)
- Other members are representatives at-large of the community served by the program or any delegate agency (may include parents of children formerly enrolled)
- Members are elected by parents of children currently enrolled in the program

¹ If the composition of the governing body does not include individuals with the required qualifications, the governing body must use consultants or other individuals with relevant expertise and qualifications to meet the composition requirements [Head Start Act Sec. 642(c)(1)(B)(vi)].



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Head Start Governance Practices and Related Regulations

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3. The Head Start program must ensure that members of the:
Head Start Act Sec. 642(c)(1)(C), 642(c)(2)(C), and 642(c)(3)(B)
Head Start Program Performance Standards 1301.2(a) and 1301.3(b)(2)

- Governing body do not have a conflict of interest
- Policy council, and of the policy committee at the delegate level, do not have a conflict of interest

4. Head Start program has established a parent committee comprised exclusively of parents of currently enrolled children as early in the program year as possible. Head Start Program Performance Standards 1301.4 (a)

- The committee is established at the center level for center-based program and at the local program level for other program options

5. Governing body may establish advisory committees as it deems necessary for effective governance and improvement of the program. Head Start Program Performance Standards 1301.2(c)

- Establish the structure, communication, and oversight in such a way that the governing body continues to maintain its legal and fiscal responsibility
- Notify responsible HHS official of intent to establish an advisory committee



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6. Members of the governing body (or Tribal Council) receive effective and ongoing training and technical assistance (T/TA) to ensure that they understand the information they receive and are able to provide effective oversight of, make appropriate decisions for, and participate in programs of the Head Start agency.

Head Start Act Sec. 642(d)(3)

- The agency has a system for identifying the T/TA needs of the governing body (or Tribal Council) and using this information to develop a T/TA plan

7. Members of the Policy Council receive effective and ongoing training and technical assistance (T/TA) to ensure that they understand the information they receive and can provide effective oversight of, make appropriate decisions for, and participate in programs of the Head Start agency.

Head Start Act Sec. 642(d)(3)
Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.12(m)

- The agency has a system for identifying the T/TA needs of the Policy Council and using this information to develop a T/TA plan
- T/TA or orientations include training on program performance standards and training indicated in 1302.12(m)



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8. The governing body (or Tribal Council) exercises the following responsibilities:

Head Start Act Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)-(III)
Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(VI)

- Establishes procedures and criteria for recruiting, selecting, and enrolling children
- Selects delegate agencies, as appropriate
- Develops procedures for selecting Policy Council members
- Reviews applications and amendments to applications for funding

9. The governing body (or Tribal Council) exercises responsibility for the following:

Head Start Act Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(VII)(aa)-(dd)

- Approval of all major financial expenditures of the agency
- Annual approval of the operating budget of the agency
- The selection (except when a financial auditor is assigned by the state under state law or is assigned under local law) of independent financial auditors to report all critical accounting policies and practices to the governing body (or Tribal Council)



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- The financial audit
- Monitoring of the agency's actions to correct any audit findings and other actions necessary to comply with applicable laws (including regulations) governing financial statement and accounting practices

10. The governing body (or Tribal Council) is engaged in reviewing and approving each of the following:

Head Start Act Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(V)(aa-cc)
Sec. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(VIII)-(IX)

- The annual self-assessment
- The agency's progress in carrying out the programmatic and fiscal provisions in the agency's grant application, including implementation of corrective actions
- Personnel policies of the agency regarding the hiring, evaluation, termination, and compensation of agency employees
- Results from monitoring conducted under section 641A(c), including appropriate follow-up activities



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11. The program staff ensures the parent committee assumes responsibility for the following:

Head Start Program Performance Standards 1301.4 (b)

- Work with program staff to determine the best methods to engage families using strategies that are most effective in their community
- Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families
- Have a process for communication with the Policy Council and policy committee
- Participate in the recruitment and screening of Early Head Start and Head Start employees

12. The Head Start program works with the governing body (or Tribal Council) and Policy Council to make available to the public a report published at least once each year that discloses the following information from the most recently concluded fiscal year:

Head Start Act Sec. 644 (a)(2)(A-H)

- The total amount of public and private funds received and the amount from each source
- An explanation of budgetary expenditures and proposed budget for the fiscal year



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- The total number of children and families served, the average monthly enrollment (as a percentage of funded enrollment), and the percentage of eligible children served
- The results of the most recent review by the Secretary and the financial audit
- The percentage of enrolled children that received medical and dental exams
- Information about family engagement activities
- The agency's efforts to prepare children for kindergarten
- A summary of a program's most recent community assessment 1302.102(d)(2)
- Any other information required by the Secretary

13. The following reports are received by the governing body and the Policy Council and members find them useful:

Head Start Act Sec. 642(d)(2)(A-1)

Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.102

Annual reports:

- The financial audit
- The self-assessment, including any findings related to such assessment



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- Program Information Reports (PIRs)

Monthly reports:

- Financial statements, including credit card expenditures (if the program uses credit cards)

- Program information summaries

- Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children whose care is partially subsidized by another public agency
- Reports of meals and snacks provided through programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Additional reports:

- Community assessment, completed every five years with annual updates



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- Long-term goals for ensuring programs are and remain responsive to community needs, goals for the provision of educational, health, nutritional, and family and community engagement, program services to promote the school readiness of enrolled children, school readiness goals, and short-term measurable programmatic and financial objectives

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- Applicable and current updates from the Secretary (e.g., Program Instructions, Information Memorandums, etc.)

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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- Ongoing monitoring data, data on school readiness goals and other information described in 1302.102

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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14. Head Start agency's governing body and Policy Council have jointly established written procedures for resolving internal disputes between the governing board and Policy Council in a timely manner that includes impasse procedure. These procedures must:

- Demonstrate that the governing body considers proposed decisions from the Policy Council and that the Policy Council considers proposed decisions from the governing body

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Head Start Program Performance Standards 1301.6 (a)(1-3)
and 1301.6(b)



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is a disagreement, require the governing body and the Policy Council to notify the other in writing why it does not accept a decision 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe a decision-making process and a timeline to resolve disputes and reach decisions that are not arbitrary, capricious, or illegal 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governing body and Policy Council must select a mutually agreeable third-party mediator (as outlined in impasse procedures) 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governing body and Policy Council are prepared to participate in a formal process of mediation that leads to a resolution of the dispute (as outlined in impasse procedures) 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>15. If no resolution is reached with a mediator (NOTE: American Indian and Alaska Native Programs skip and move to next section)</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governing body and Policy Council must select a mutually agreeable arbitrator whose decision is final 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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<p>16. The Policy Council approve and submit to the governing body decisions about each of the following activities of program operations:</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to support the active engagement of families in the program 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget planning for program expenditures, including policies for reimbursement related to participation in Policy Council activities 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bylaws for the operation of the Policy Council 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program personnel policies and decisions regarding the employment of program staff, consistent with 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(IX), including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers and criteria for the employment and dismissal of program staff 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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17. A program must submit reports, as appropriate, to the HHS official immediately or as soon as practicable: Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.102 (d) and 1304.12

- Any significant incidents affecting the health and safety of program participants
- Circumstances affecting the financial viability of the program
- Breaches of personally identifiable information
- Program involvement in legal proceedings
- Any matter for which notification or a report to state, tribal or local authorities is required by law:
 - Reports addressing child abuse and neglect or laws governing sex offenders
 - Incidents that require classrooms or centers to be closed for any reason
 - Legal proceedings directly related to program operations
 - All conditions required to be reported under 1304.12 including child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

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Comments section:

Our organization needs assistance in understanding and implementing the following governance regulations:

Additional comments, questions, or concerns:



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood
Program Management and Fiscal Operations