



Department of Human Services Head Start Program

Continuation Application for Year 2

Program Year 2025-2026

Project Description

The City of San Antonio, Department of Human Services, Head Start Program (hereinafter, DHS Head Start Program) operates a Head Start Preschool (hereinafter, Head Start Pre-K Program) and an Early Head Start (hereinafter, EHS Program) Program. The DHS Head Start Program submits the enclosed continuation application for year two of the five-year grant cycle spanning February 1, 2025 through January 31, 2026. This application provides information on the 2024-2025 program year operations and details planned services and improvements for the 2025-2026 program year. The DHS Head Start Program will continue program services in two of the 19 school districts located within Bexar County to include San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) and Edgewood Independent School District (EISD). Both SAISD and EISD are located in the central area of Bexar County and center-city of San Antonio. Collectively, SAISD and EISD have the highest demonstrated need for program services in the county based on the program’s community assessment that highlights a multitude of risk factors faced by families like low educational attainment, high levels of poverty, and a high number of children born in single parent households compared to other areas of the community. Together, the partners operate a Head Start Pre-K Program that offer services throughout both school districts that continues to raise the quality of early childhood care and education for children and families identified as low-income in the proposed service area. In addition, EISD along with Blessed Sacrament Academy operates an EHS program serving children six week to 3 years of age. Blessed Sacrament Academy is deeply rooted within the SAISD service area and

has proven high quality care for children through the Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership Program. Beginning in the 2024-2025 Program Year they will begin EHS services as part of a conversion plan that was approved in 2023-2024. The DHS Head Start Program will provide Head Start Pre-K center-based services to 2,970 children and Early Head Start will provide center-based and home-based services to 144 children.

The DHS Head Start Program, SAISD, EISD, and Blessed Sacrament Academy along with key health providers — San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health), and the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) — will ensure children enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

Through this grant application, the DHS Head Start Program is requesting funding in the amount of \$31,458,112.00. The total funding amount includes \$28,275,056.00 for the Head Start Pre-K Program operations and \$272,731.00 for training and technical assistance to offer Head Start Pre-K Program services for 2,970 children and their families. The total funding amount also includes \$2,860,102.00 for the EHS Program operations and \$50,223.00 for training and technical assistance to continue EHS Program services for 144 children and their families.

The DHS Head Start Program is strengthened by the commitment of local leaders to provide the highest quality Head Start services possible, including the City of San Antonio Mayor, City Council, and City Manager. The DHS Head Start Program and its service providers have the capacity and the commitment to carry out the Program’s mission: *Preparing children and engaging families for school readiness and life-long success.*

Program Design and Approach to Service

Delivery Sub-Section A: Goals

- 1. What are your Program Goals, Measurable Objectives, and Expected Outcomes for the project period?**

The DHS Head Start Program operates within a set of three carefully crafted program goals that directly address the well-being of Head Start children and their families. Updates to the goals, objectives, and progress on completion of measures have been included below.

Table 1 provides the specific outcome measures the DHS Head Start Program plans to accomplish within the project period. The objectives were updated during a strategic planning session in September 2023 that included DHS Head Start Program stakeholders, Head Start campus administrators, Head Start Policy Council members, parents, community leaders, and subject matter experts. The DHS Head Start Program remains committed to providing quality services and examining the progress of our program towards achieving our goals.

Table 1: DHS Head Start Program Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Education <i>Prepare children to succeed in school and life</i>	
Measurable Objectives	Outcomes
Decrease the percentage of children enrolled in the EHS Program with chronic absenteeism to 55% in 2023-2024.	At the end of the 2023-2024 program year, 59.6% of children enrolled in the EHS Program were identified as chronically absent.
Decrease the percentage of children enrolled in the Head Start Pre-K Program with chronic absenteeism to 30% in 2023-2024.	At the end of the program year, 40% of the children enrolled in the Head Start Pre-K Program were identified as chronically absent.
Increase the annual Infant Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) score by 0.5 from 4.84 in <i>Responsive Caregiving</i> in 2017-2018 to 5.34 2023-2024.	The EHS Program conducted Infant CLASS Observations during the 2023-2024 school year. The EHS Program scored a 5.6 for <i>Responsive Caregiving</i> .
Increase the annual Toddler Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores by .5 in each domain, from 5.37 in <i>Emotional and Behavioral Support</i> and 3.33 in 2017-2018 to 5.87 in Emotional and Behavioral Support and 3.83 in Engaged Support for Learning by 2023-2024.	The EHS Program conducted Toddler CLASS Observations during the 2023-2024 school year. The EHS Program scored 5.79 in <i>Emotional and Behavioral Support</i> and 3.83 in <i>Engaged Support for Learning</i> .

<p>Increase the annual Head Start Pre-K Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) scores by .5 points in each domain, from 5.65 in Emotional Support, 5.02 in Classroom Organization, and 2.99 in Instructional Support in 2016-2017 to 6.15 in Emotional Support, 5.52 in Classroom Organization, and 3.49 in Instructional Support by 2023-2024.</p>	<p>The Head Start Pre-K conducted CLASS Observations during the 2023-2024 school year. Head Start Pre-k program scored a 6.14 in <i>Emotional Support</i>, 5.69 in <i>Classroom Organization</i>, and 3.36 in <i>Instructional Support</i>.</p>
<p>Increase the percentage of children enrolled in the EHS Program that show six months or more of developmental growth in all six domains on the Early Learning Accomplishments Profile (E-LAP) from BOY to EOY by 5% from 31% in 2017-2018 to 36% in 2023-2024.</p>	<p>For the 2023-2024 school year, 15% of children who were assessed at both beginning and end of year showed six months or more of developmental growth in all 6 domains of the E-LAP assessment.</p>
<p>Increase the percentage of children enrolled in the EHS Program that show six months or more of developmental growth in all seven domains on the Learning Accomplishments Profile-3rd Edition (LAP-3) from BOY to EOY by 5% from 41% in 2017-2018 to 46% in 2023-2024.</p>	<p>For the 2023-2024 school year, 44% of children who were assessed at both beginning and end of year showed six months or more of developmental growth in all 7 domains of the LAP assessment.</p>
<p>Increase the percentage of children enrolled in Head Start Pre-K identified as PROFICIENT at EOY in Rapid Letter Naming, Rapid Vocabulary, Phonological Awareness, Letter/Sound Correspondence, Story Retell & Comprehension, and Book & Print Awareness on the CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System to 75% across all areas in 2023-2024.</p>	<p>For the 2023-2024 school year, 77% of children in the program were identified as PROFICIENT in Rapid Letter Naming, 71% in Rapid Vocabulary, 77% in Phonological Awareness, 89% in Letter/Sound Correspondence, 87% in Story Retell & Comprehension, and 74% in Book & Print Awareness</p>
<p>Increase the percentage of children transitioning to kindergarten enrolled in the Head Start Pre-K Program identified as PROFICIENT at EOY in Rapid Letter Naming, Rapid Vocabulary, Phonological Awareness, and Mathematics on the CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System to 75% across all areas in 2023-2024.</p>	<p>For the 2023-2024 school year, 75% of the children transitioning to kindergarten were identified as PROFICIENT at EOY in Rapid Letter Naming, 64% in Rapid Vocabulary, 76% in Phonological Awareness, and 83% Mathematics.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Goal 2: Family Support <i>Promote the well-being of families to enable them to support their children’s learning and development</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Measurable Objectives</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Outcomes</p>
<p>Increase the percentage of parents/guardians who make progress towards completion of an identified <i>Family Self-Sufficiency</i> goal by the end of the program year by 9% from 71% in 2019-2020 to 80% in 2023-2024.</p>	<p>By the end of the program year, 53% of families enrolled in the program made progress towards completion of an identified <i>Family Self-Sufficiency</i> goal</p>

Maintain the percentage of parents/guardians who make progress towards completion of an identified Family Life Practice goal at 90% or higher through the year 2023-2024.	By the end of the program year, 86.% of families enrolled in the program made progress towards completion of an identified <i>Family Life-Practice</i> goal.
Increase the average number of services received per family (such as emergency assistance, parenting education, asset building, or job training and education services) to promote family outcomes from 2.7 in 2021-2022 to 3.0 in 2023-2024.	Families with children enrolled in the program received an average of 3.2 services during the 2023-2024 program year.
Increase the number of parents/guardians that participate in the Head Start Triple P Parenting Program by 96 from 4 in 2020-2021 to 100 in 2023-2024.	By the end of the program year, 246 parents/guardians participated in the Triple Parenting Program.
Goal 3: Health <i>Children are healthy and ready to learn</i>	
Measurable Objectives	Outcomes
Increase the percentage of children who are up-to-date on TX EPSDT requirements at the end of the program year to 78% by 2023-2024.	By the end of the 2023-2024 program year, 73% of the children enrolled in the program were up to date on TX EPSDT requirements.
Increase the percentage of children who receive services following a referral for hearing concerns at the end of the program year by 10% from 55% in 2018-2019 to 65% in 2023-2024.	By the end of the program year, 56% of children enrolled in the program received services following a referral for a hearing concern.
Increase the percentage of children who receive services following a referral for vision concerns at the end of the program year by 10% from 70% in 2018-2019 to 80% in 2023-2024.	By the end of the program year, 46% of the children enrolled in the program received services following a referral for a vision concern.

<p>Increase the percentage of children identified as <i>Class 2</i> following a dental evaluation that are designated as <i>Treatment Complete</i> by the end of the program year by 4% from 63% in 2021-2022 to 67% in 2023-2024.</p>	<p>During the 2023-2024 school year, 62% of the children identified with a dental concern were designated as <i>Treatment Complete</i> at the end of the year,</p>
<p>Decrease the percentage of parents/guardians that report their child had 2 or more sugary drinks. The baseline will be established in 2022-2023 with a percentage decrease determined in 2023-2024.</p>	<p>The Wellness Assessment was implemented with families at the beginning and end of the year. During the 2023-2024 program year, 49% (540/1110) of parents who stated that their child had 2 or more sugary drinks per day at the beginning of the year reported a decrease in consumption at the end of the year.</p>
<p>Increase the percentage of parents/guardians that report that mental health/wellness services/supports are available by 24% from 11% in 2021-2022 to 35% in 2023-2024.</p>	<p>This measure was met in the 2022-2023 school year. The program continues to focus on the family’s perception of the mental health/family wellness services. 95% of parents/guardians that responded to the 2023-2024 annual survey reported that the mental health/wellness support services received met the needs of their family</p>

The DHS Head Start Program showed improvements across several areas. While chronic absenteeism continues to be an area of concern, the Head Start Pre-K Program decreased the number of children identified as chronically absent by 5%. Infant and Toddler CLASS Scores for the 2023-2024 program year again exceeded the previous year’s scores, and the Head Start Pre-K Program’s internal CLASS scores exceeded the Office of Head Start Competitive Thresholds and increased in Emotional Support and Classroom Organization. The percentage of children identified as PROFICIENT at the end of the year exceeded 75% across 4 of the 6 assessment focus areas. The DHS Head Start Program continues to focus on fidelity to the assessment and working with families to support their progress towards meeting their goals. By the end of the 2023 – 2024 program year, all staff from the Family Wellness team, which is a specialized team of family support workers supporting our most vulnerable families, earned accreditation in the tiered,

evidence-based parenting curriculum, Triple P in Level 2 and 3. The DHS Head Start Program saw a significant increase in the number of Triple P participants. The program continues to focus on connecting families to their medical home and ensuring children have health care coverage to increase the percentage of children up to date on EPSDT by the end of the program year, this percentage has increase over prior year. The program continues to address follow up regarding a referral for hearing and vision concerns.

Oral health continues to be a priority and with the support of Metro Health, the program is working to increase in the percentage of children who received treatment following the identification of dental concern. Finally, the program continues its focus on health and wellness support for children and families.

- 2. List any additions, deletions, or revisions to your Program Goals, Measurable Objectives, and Expected Outcomes that have occurred since last year's application and briefly describe the reasons for those changes.**

The 2023-2024 school year marked the final year of our 2019 5 year Strategic Plan. Head Start program staff has partnered with an outside consultant to facilitate the process of developing new strategic goals, objectives, and measures to guide the program through the next 5 years. This process has involved Head Start staff from all program areas and levels, partners, stakeholders, governing body, and Policy Council. This new plan will be implemented starting in the 2024-2025 school year.

- 3. Explain how your program's School Readiness Goals align with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: ages birth to five, state and tribal early learning guidelines, as appropriate, and requirements and expectations of the local schools where children will transition.**

The DHS Head Start Program's definition of School Readiness has three facets: 1) children are ready

for kindergarten; 2) families are ready to support their children’s learning; and 3) schools are ready to receive the children. This three-part approach to school readiness integrates all aspects of a child and family’s well-being, including their educational, social, and emotional strengths and needs. Recognizing the importance of all Head Start service areas in promoting school readiness, DHS emphasizes parent engagement, education opportunities, ongoing training and technical assistance, community collaboration, and high-quality early childhood education as central to its school readiness approach.

The DHS Head Start Program School Readiness team includes DHS Head Start Program staff, SAISD and EISD teachers, site administrators, childcare staff, community members, and parents/guardians. In establishing the DHS Head Start Program School Readiness Plan, learning outcomes aligned to the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF) were prioritized, and the team developed a set of goals. The DHS Head Start Program School Readiness team developed school readiness goals for each of the five central Head Start domains and created a single set of School Readiness Goals for all children, 0-5 years of age and objectives based on the goals and indicators in the HSELOF. During the 2023-2024 school year, the DHS Head Start Program worked with parents, staff, community members, and stakeholders to develop a new set of school readiness goals for the next five-year grant period.

4. If additions, deletions, or revisions were made to the program’s School Readiness Goals since last year’s application, then describe how the revised goals align with Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five

In Spring 2024, the program developed new school readiness goals. The DHS Head Start Program distributed a survey to parents/guardians, teachers, staff, and community partners and stake holders. The survey required participants to identify knowledge and skills from the HSELOF key to success in kindergarten. After the survey results, the program convened the School Readiness Summit. Policy Council members, parents/guardians, teachers, staff, and community partners and stake holders reviewed the survey results developed recommendations for new school readiness goals aligned to HSELOF. The goals were

finalized and approved by the Head Start Education Advisory Committee, Head Start Policy Council and our Governing body advisory committee (Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB)).

Thirteen School Readiness goals within five central domains resulted from this collaborative and data-driven process. The five domains are: 1) Approaches to Learning; 2) Social and Emotional Development; 3) Language and Literacy; 4) Cognition; and 5) Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development. Additionally, the program's school readiness goals are aligned to the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines, the Texas Infant, Toddler, and Three-Year Old Early Learning Guidelines, and each of the various curricula used across the program, including Scholastic Pre-k On My Way, SAAVAS Three Cheers for Pre-K, Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos, and Partners for a Healthy Baby Curriculum.

School readiness information is presented to parents when they review the Parent Handbook, Head Start Parent Orientation, Governing Body advisory committee meetings, Policy Council meetings, Parent Connection Committee meetings, parent conferences, trainings, and handouts to ensure all families are informed of the focus on school readiness.

The educational program's capacity to build school readiness in all children will define the success of the DHS Head Start Program. Child assessment and related data is gathered, analyzed and reported every quarter by DHS education staff to quantify progress towards goal achievement. This includes thorough review of beginning, middle and end of year outcomes as well as evaluation of teacher-child interaction using Infant, Toddler, and Pre-K Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), an observational tool designed to improve teaching and learning.

The CLASS results will guide the DHS Head Start Program's continuous improvement initiatives, including professional development and coaching. Reports are provided to the Head Start Policy Council and governing body advisory committee on program performance and quarterly reviews of objective

achievement.

5. Discuss how your program involved governing body, policy council, and parents in developing the Program Goals.

The DHS Head Start Program develops its program goals through its Five-Year Strategic Planning process. This process is purposefully designed as an inclusive method incorporating the feedback and input from diverse perspectives, to include the DHS Head Start Program's governing body, the City of San Antonio's City Council, and the Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB), which acts as the DHS Head Start advisory committee to the City Council, as well as the City of San Antonio Head Start Policy Council (HSPC). In addition to our governing body participation, DHS Head Start Program parents/guardians and other community stakeholders are included in this process. To ensure a wide range of involvement is achieved, these groups are invited and encouraged to participate in the Head Start Program's Quarterly Self-Assessment Data reviews and Annual Strategic Planning events. During these events, the members actively participate by providing recommendations, asking questions in open discussion, and providing feedback regarding program data and goals. All participants assist in the development of the program's goals during the Strategic Planning event. The DHS Head Start Program's governing body, including the advisory committee to the governing body, and HSPC members, review and approve the final Self-Assessment report, School Readiness goals, and Five-Year Strategic Plan.

Sub-Section B: Service Delivery

1. Service and Recruitment Area (see 1302.11(a) and 1302.13):

The DHS Head Start program will continue to partner with both SAISD and EISD, along with Blessed Sacrament Academy which is located within the SAISD boundaries. Collectively, SAISD and EISD have the highest demonstrated need for program services in the county based on the program's community assessment that highlights a multitude of risk factors faced by families,

including low educational attainment, high levels of poverty, and a high number of children born in single parent households compared to other areas of the community.

In order to prioritize families with the most need for program services, the DHS Head Start Program utilizes selection criteria based on the annual community assessment. DHS Head Start Program selection criteria assists program staff to ensure program services are accessible and available to children and families most in need of services.

The DHS Head Start Program utilizes a selection process that prioritizes children based on a point system which weighs vulnerability factors: income, homelessness, foster care status, public assistance, and disability status. This process is used for all children, including children with disabilities and children that speak a language other than English.

2. Needs of Children and Families:

According to the current 2023 Community Assessment Update, there is an estimated total of 24,333 eligible children under five years of age within the DHS Head Start Program service area, including 19,928 within SAISD and 4,405 within EISD. The service area contains a higher concentration of Hispanic residents than most other Bexar County school districts, with SAISD comprised of approximately 79% Hispanic residents, and EISD comprised of approximately 95% Hispanic residents. Both SAISD and EISD have greater proportions of Hispanic residents than Bexar County (61%) and the state of Texas (39%).

Census data shows there are 2,446 children under the age of three in EISD's two zip codes and 999 (41%) live in poverty and are eligible for EHS. Though the poverty percentage is relatively static, resident density varies. More than half (68%) of all families in these zip codes have a female head of household.

Fifty-one percent of SAISD residents and sixty-nine percent of EISD residents speak a

language other than English, generally Spanish. SAISD and EISD are among the Bexar County school districts with the greatest proportion of students participating in bilingual education. These are greater percentages of bilingual and ESL students enrolled than in Bexar County (14%).

Additional needs and considerations of DHS Head Start Program children and families stem from many participants and families being homeless, experiencing foster care, and/or having a disability. The available data showed that the DHS Head Start Program served 451 families experiencing homelessness and 51 children in foster care during the 2023-2024 program year. In 2023-2024, approximately 646 children served by the DHS Head Start Program were determined to have a disability (i.e., 19 % of cumulative enrollment). Among these children, speech and language impairments were the most common disabilities (i.e., 359 children, 11% of total cumulative enrollment).

The next most common disabilities among enrolled children were non-categorical developmental delays (i.e., 129 children, 4.0%) and Autism (i.e., 97 children, 3%). All enrolled Head Start Pre-K children determined to have a primary disability receive special education services through SAISD and EISD. Children in the EHS program with a diagnosed disability are primarily provided services through local Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) programs.

According to the community assessment, the average educational attainment among adult residents of SAISD and EISD is less than that of the city, county, state, and nation. Nearly one-third of the population of SAISD residents and over one-third of the population of EISD do not have a high school credential; fifteen percent of SAISD residents and 5% of EISD residents earned at least a bachelor's degree, compared to the City of San Antonio (26%), and Bexar County (29%). Many households in SAISD and EISD rely on public assistance. Over one-third of EISD

households and nearly one-quarter of SAISD households use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and 10% of SAISD and 12% of EISD households rely on Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) are other public assistance programs utilized in the Head Start service area. Local government and non-profit organizations provide additional support services to the DHS Head Start families. Metro Health and the University of the Incarnate Word provide immunizations and dental services to the SAISD and EISD enrolled Head Start children, and the San Antonio Food Bank provides food and grocery products to children and families in the DHS Head Start Program.

In SAISD and EISD, there are 117 childcare facilities providing childcare to children three to four years of age. The childcare capacity for children three to four years of age in SAISD is 8,468 in 98 facilities and the number of children aged three to four years of age is 8,682. The childcare capacity for children three to four years of age in EISD is 2,191 in 19 facilities and the number of children aged three to four years of age is 1,898.

Within the service area, there are 97 childcare facilities that serve infants and toddlers with a capacity of 7,513. The capacity in SAISD is 5,912 in 80 facilities while the number of children is 11,174. In EISD the capacity is 1,601 at 17 centers and the number of children is 2,604.

3. Proposed Program Option(s) and Funded Enrollment Slots:

The DHS Head Start Program will offer full-day center-based services for both Head Start Pre-K and EHS during the 2024 – 2025 school year and beyond. In addition, the EHS Program will continue to offer home-based services to children in the 2024 – 2025 school year. The DHS Head Start Program, SAISD, EISD and Blessed Sacrament Academy are committed to ensuring a safe learning environment. Through our partnership, Head Start Pre-K and EHS services align with the normal school day, allowing enrolled children and their older siblings to maintain the same schedule to increase convenience for parents.

The Head Start Pre-K Program will operate seven hours or more per day, five days a week, 36 weeks per year, and 1,275 hours per year for a total of 178 days a year. The DHS Head Start staff connect families to the State of Texas' Child Care Services (CCS) and other resources to ensure extended care and wraparound services are available to accommodate working families. The leveraging of state Pre-K funds and school district facilities allow for full-day, center-based services. San Antonio ISD, Edgewood ISD and Blessed Sacrament Academy have the capacity and infrastructure in place to provide a stable, structured, high-quality center-based program model. San Antonio ISD currently serves 2,193 Head Start PreK children at 24 campuses. Edgewood ISD currently serves 777 Head Start PreK children at 5 campuses.

The EHS Program center-based option operates at a frequency to ensure 1,380 annual hours of services are provided. The EHS Program features operating hours that are aligned with the needs of parents. As families enroll, program staff seek additional resources to support the families that are most in need of EHS services. Early Head Start center-based services operate at a minimum 198 days per year, seven (7) hours per day. EISD serves 112 children in the center-based program and 8 children in the home-based program. Blessed Sacrament Academy will serve 24 children, all in center-based.

In the EHS Program home-based option, EISD employs one (1) home visitor with a caseload of no more than 8 families. The home visitor conducts one home visit per week per family for no less than ninety (90) minutes providing no less than 46 visits per program year for those children enrolled at the beginning of the program year. No less than 22 group socialization activities are provided to all 8 home-based families.

The current program model has an advanced system of program planning that incorporates members of the Head Start Pre-K Program, EHS Program and service provider staff, HSPC, Governing Board Advisory Committee members (Community Action Advisory Board), and community stakeholders. These groups engage in the data review process, as well as focused annual and ongoing program planning to ensure continuous improvement and high-quality services to meet the needs of children and families served within

the community.

4. Centers and Facilities:

The DHS Head Start Program will operate a total of 30 center locations for the **2024-2025** program year. Blessed Sacrament Academy is a new addition to the list of Early Head Start locations due to the additional infant-toddler slots gained through a Change in Scope approved by the Office of Head Start in March 2024. Fifty (50) Head Start Pre-K slots were converted to 16 slots to provide EHS services to the children and families in the SAISD service area. DHS worked collaboratively with EISD leadership to reduce the EHS allocation of slots by eight to shift to the SAISD service area for a total of 24 slots. Group socializations offered to the home-base participants use various spaces at the EISD Stafford ECC location. DHS Head Start PreK Program 2024 – 2025 school year starts on August 13, 2024 and will end on May 29, 2025. DHS Early Head Start Program will begin on August 13, 2024 and end June 26, 2025.

Table 1. Slot and Contract Allocations per Head Start Pre-K Program Service Providers

Service Provider	Site	Funded Enrollment	Address
EISD	Cardenas	267	3300 Ruiz Street, 78228
	Lyndon B. Johnson	37	6515 W. Commerce 78227
	Loma Park	148	400 Aurora, 78228
	Perales	57	1507 Ceralvo 78237
	Stafford	268	611 SW 36th Street, 78237
	Total Enrollment	777	
Service Provider	Site	Funded Enrollment	Address
SAISD	Arnold	100	467 Freiling, 78213
	Ball	74	343 Koehler Ct., 78223
	Barkley Ruiz	54	1111 S. Navidad St., 78207
	Bowden	57	515 Willow Street, 78202
	Cameron	93	3635 Belgium Lane, 78219
	Carroll ECE	231	463 Holmgreen, 78220
	Carvajal	64	225 Arizona Street, 78207
	Crockett	82	221 Morales Street, 78207
	De Zavala	85	2311 San Luis Street, 78207
	Graebner	65	530 Hoover Ave., 78225

	Hillcrest	57	211 W. Malone Ave., 78214
	Hirsch	94	4826 Sea Breeze Drive, 78220
	J.T. Brackenridge	118	1214 Guadalupe, 78207
	Kelly	42	1026 Thompson Pl
	Madison	143	2900 W. Woodlawn Ave., 78228
	Margil	100	1000 Perez St., 78207
	Maverick	107	107 Raleigh Street, 78201
	MLK @ Gates	67	510 Morningview Dr., 78220
	Neal	134	3407 Capitol Ave., 78201
	Pershing	54	600 Sandmeyer St. 78208
	Sarah King	116	1001 Ceralvo Street, 78207
	Schenck @ Foster	143	6718 Pecan Valley Dr., 78223
	Smith	76	823 S. Gevers St., 78203
	Washington	37	1823 Nolan St., 78202
	Total Enrollment	2,193	

Table 2. Slot and Contract Allocations per Early Head Start Program Service Provider

Service Provider	Site Name	Location	Funded Enrollment
Blessed Sacrament Academy	Blessed Sacrament Child Development Center	1135 Mission Rd., 78210	24
EISD Center Base	Stafford ECE	611 SW 36th St., 78237	112
EISD Home Base	Stafford ECE	611 SW 36 th St., 78237	8

5. Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (see 1302.13, 1302.14, 1302.15, and 1302.16):

The DHS Head Start Program actively recruits families most in need of services. Recruitment efforts are conducted throughout the year in collaboration with SAISD, EISD, and Blessed Sacrament Academy as well as other community partners. Recruitment efforts continue throughout the year and increase annually in the late winter and early spring. The recruitment strategies include a multimedia campaign, participation in community events, canvassing neighborhoods, street banners, newspaper advertising, social media, meeting with community organizations to educate about the service options, and referrals with other agencies. Recruitment efforts include staff who were former parents or Head Start children in an effort to recruit populations that have been historically marginalized. Recruitment plans are developed and approved annually by the

Governing Body and HSPC.

In order to promote regular attendance, the DHS Head Start Program emphasizes and provides information to parents about the benefits of regular attendance and family support staff engages with families to promote regular attendance and assist families with referrals for services that enhance attendance. Special efforts for chronically absent children and other vulnerable children include a home visit or other direct contact with the family to determine the cause of chronic absenteeism and to assist in removing barriers by providing assistance with referrals and other needed services. Many program staff are former Head Start parents who are able to engage in conversations with historically marginalized families around the importance of regular attendance.

6. Education and Child Development (see 1302 Subpart C):

At the time of this application, there have been no revisions to this section. The DHS Head Start Program provides early education and child development services according to the following philosophy: 1) high-quality early education programs include curriculum that is thoughtfully planned to focus children's attention on important concepts, skills and behaviors in critical areas of development and learning; 2) developmentally appropriate, engaging and culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum promotes positive outcomes for all; 3) unless teachers or home visitors know where each child is with respect to learning outcomes and development, they cannot be intentional about helping a child progress; 4) teachers' instructional practices can be improved, opportunities to individualize instruction can be increased and standards can be met when curriculum and assessment are linked; and 5) home visitors' practices can be improved, opportunities to individualize strategies to support parent-child interactions can be strengthened, and standards can be met when curriculum and assessment are linked. All training, technical

assistance and teacher observation activities relate to one or more of these core concepts.

Individualization of instruction and support is central to the DHS Head Start Program philosophy. Individualization in instruction and support means child-based activities are developed, and lessons and assessments that support learning and development based on each child's strengths, needs, and interests are implemented. Development of activities and learning are made with input from the child and their parents/guardians and are informed by formal and informal assessment data.

The DHS Head Start Program collects, aggregates, and analyzes formal child assessment data three times per year: beginning of the year (BOY), middle of the year (MOY), and end of the year (EOY). Analysis of change is conducted at the child, classroom, center and program levels and trends are used to adjust instruction and design professional development opportunities. Parents are informed of assessment results and their children's progress. Beginning of the year assessment data provides the baseline of each child's strengths and needs and signals education and home visiting staff of areas requiring additional support. Middle of the year data is compared with BOY data to determine gains and identify areas for continued support. End of the year data is used to identify student growth and the need for program improvements. At the end of the program year, an analysis and comparison of BOY, MOY, and EOY will help underscore program achievement, the impact of service delivery, and school readiness goals for the upcoming program year.

DHS Head Start Pre-K Education and Child Development

The DHS Head Start Program, SAISD, and EISD share the same program philosophy and approach to the achievement of school readiness with a clear understanding that, in order for children to be successful, curricula must be aligned with the school districts where children attend school. For the Head Start Pre-K Program, the curricula were adopted by SAISD and EISD

utilizing the Texas Education Association (TEA) approved curricula lists. These curricula have been identified as research-based and developmentally appropriate and are adopted by the State of Texas. All curricula are aligned with the Texas Pre-Kindergarten Guidelines, the HSELOF, and ensure alignment and a continuum of instruction as children enter kindergarten. In addition, Head Start parents were provided the opportunity through public forums to view the state adopted curriculums, ask questions, discuss, and provide feedback. Edgewood ISD utilizes SAVVAS Three Cheers for Pre-K Texas and SAISD implements Texas Pre-K On My Way by Scholastic.

The Head Start Pre-K Program utilizes the CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System Pre-K (CIRCLE), a standardized, criterion-referenced measure that relates well to established standardized tests and is sensitive to growth in children's skills over time for children ages 3-5 years old. The results of CIRCLE are used to generate a detailed picture of each child's growth and development across 15 areas so that individualized, developmentally appropriate activities can be planned and implemented.

The CIRCLE Progress Monitoring System provides a score for each area assessed. Children are described as *PROFICIENT* if they score at or above the cut point, or threshold, listed in accordance with their age, and indicates if the child is on track and has a developed understanding of the measure. Children are described as *NOT PROFICIENT* if they score below the cut point, or threshold, listed in accordance with their age and indicates an underdeveloped understanding of the measure and a need for more skill development or intensive intervention. The threshold, or cut point, increases at each assessment. Children may be described as *OUT OF RANGE* if they are not within the specified age range for the measure, or if there are no established cut points or thresholds for the area assessed.

The results of the assessment are used to generate a detailed picture of a child's

developmental progress across various domains so that individualized, developmentally appropriate activities can be planned and implemented.

DHS Early Head Start Education and Child Development

The EHS Program continues to use the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos, designed to advance school success in vulnerable children. Creative Curriculum is used for the center-based option and supplements the home base curriculum. Using Creative Curriculum, staff recognize that the curriculum provides the guidance, support, and practical ideas for working with families to build trusting and respectful partnerships with its core “Partnering with Families” component central to the overall curriculum.

Creative Curriculum, which is based in child development and early education research and theory, was chosen for its capacity to quickly achieve a consistent level of quality, regardless of the developmental stage a child is at when they enter the program. Aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and the Texas Infant, Toddler and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guideline, Creative Curriculum materials provide simple, easily adopted, and detailed instructions for: a) creating learning environments; b) individualizing for diverse learners and children with disabilities; c) teaching content areas; and d) integrating in-depth investigations of topics of interest to children.

Partners for a Healthy Baby: Prenatal to 3 is the curriculum for the home-based option. The research-based curriculum focuses on ensuring parents are supported to provide responsive care and other effective learning experiences in an environment that encourages their child’s growth and development. Partners for a Healthy Baby builds upon family strengths, abilities and skills while placing emphasis on parents being their child’s first teacher. The curriculum provides a systematic approach to address comprehensive roles including enhancing child health and

development, positive parenting, infant mental health, economic self-sufficiency, and family stability. Home visitors also supplement the curriculum with components of Creative Curriculum to provide additional hands-on parent activities to support positive relationships and the child's development.

The EHS Program utilizes the Early Learning Accomplishments Profile (E-LAP) for children birth – 36 months old and the Learning Accomplishments Profile – 3rd Edition (LAP-3) for children who turn three during the program year as the assessment is designed for children 36 – 72 months of age.

The E-LAP and LAP-3, criterion-referenced assessments, provide a systematic method for observing the skill development of children at all stages. The LAP system assesses each child's strengths and needs in seven domains - gross motor, fine motor, cognition, language, self-help, social emotional (personal social), and pre-writing - which align with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. The availability of LAP data assist teachers/home visitors in tailoring individualized instruction, support and activities to each child's level. Children are described as scoring ON TARGET in each developmental domain when the developmental age is +/- six months of a child's chronological age. The EHS Program centers/home visitors summarize and share assessment information with parents at the beginning, middle and end of each year. Parent input regarding assessment results is used by staff to establish individual school readiness goals for each child.

7. Health (see 1302 Subpart D):

At the time of this application, there have been no revisions to this section. The DHS Head Start Program services are structured around a health model grounded in parent engagement to ensure the health and well-being of each child and their family. The program's health systems not

only meet Head Start Performance Standards but support families in establishing life-long healthy lifestyle habits.

The DHS Head Start Program, SAISD, EISD, and Blessed Sacrament work collaboratively to establish strong policies, procedures, and partnerships to ensure that the health, nutrition, and mental health needs of children and families are met. These policies, procedures, and partnerships are supported by effective program systems in the areas of recordkeeping, reporting, communication, monitoring, and planning to ensure service coordination and that the communications with parents and families are structured and timely.

The Head Start Pre-K and EHS Program follow guidance from the Office of Head Start, the American Dental Association, and the local health authority regarding oral health services. Oral health and education are a priority for our program. The DHS Head Start Program contracts with the Metro Health Dental Division to provide onsite dental services. With parental consent, children enrolled in the Head Start program receive one dental evaluation and two fluoride varnishes, while children enrolled in the EHS Program receive two dental evaluations and two fluoride varnishes during the program year. Trained in oral health care, Metro Health staff provide a toothbrush, toothpaste, and timer for all children, as well as referrals for dental care, parent education sessions, information regarding local dental providers, and case management for children with identified oral health concerns. Children participate in tooth-brushing and age-appropriate oral health education daily.

Families living in SAISD and EISD communities are at high risk for lead exposure due to the age of the housing inventory available in the area. In partnership with the University of the Incarnate Word Miller School of Nursing (UIW), the DHS Head Start Program provides on-site lead screenings for children with a missing blood lead screening, previously elevated blood level result,

or for any child that has been identified as high risk. Each child must have a signed parent/guardian consent form before the screening is conducted. Children with reported high lead levels are provided one on one case management by UIW Faculty. Families are also provided with a referral to the City of San Antonio Green and Healthy Homes Initiative program for possible home rehabilitation and lead abatement services.

The DHS Head Start Program partners with the City of San Antonio Green and Healthy Homes Initiative (SAGHHI), Neighborhood and Housing Department. The SAGHHI is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funded program that addresses health and safety hazards, such as lead-based paint, mold, asthma triggers, and fire hazards. The SAGHHI provides assistance in creating healthy, safe, energy-efficient and sustainable homes for families with homes built prior to 1978 and where children under 6 years of age live and spend more than 6 hours a week.

DHS Head Start Program staff continue to work with families to ensure they are aware of the importance of staying up to date on well child exams, immunizations, and any other healthcare needs. Families are encouraged to advocate for their child's health needs and ensure developmental milestones are reached as appropriate.

Wellness Services for Children and Families (see 1302 Subpart D):

The DHS Head Start Program prioritizes the health and well-being of all staff, children, and families by implementing a comprehensive ongoing trauma-informed approach. The program staff specialized teams that collaborate with other content areas and partners that consists of both licensed and trained mental health professionals to address individualized family needs utilizing various modalities such as family needs assessments and wellness assessments while implementing person-centered, strengths-based, and trauma-informed care approaches. The

program provides professional development opportunities to all staff to continue building a trauma informed approach and increase capacity on the impact trauma has on staff, children, and families. Additional training and professional development are planned for all staff on strategies that can be implemented to support families through a trauma-informed care approach.

DHS Head Start PreK Program Wellness Services

The Head Start PreK Program implements dedicated support to Head Start families and staff through the Head Start Family Wellness Team. The Family Wellness Team is comprised of licensed and trained mental health professionals that are integrated within the Family and Community Support team. This team design is targeted and ongoing, to provide specialized wellness support to both Head Start families and staff. The Family Wellness Team offers Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), which focuses on strategies for creating and fostering a safe and positive environment, using assertive discipline with boundaries, having realistic expectations, and taking care of yourself as a parent. The evidence-based curriculum is an intervention for positive and healthier relationships: it focuses on the wellness of the child and family unit. In addition to offering general strategies on the development of the child and individualized one-on-one skills training and parenting strategies, the team also offers higher level of interventions for families with additional risk factors that have not changed as a result of participation in other levels of interventions. This support includes a focus on stress coping skills for parent, mood management, and when appropriate, marital communication and partner support.

The Family Wellness Team's procedures allow for support to be provided to Head Start families based on individual needs utilizing a strengths-based approach and solution-focused targeted case management. They also focus on providing support to division staff experiencing secondary trauma from lived experiences of the families they serve. When working directly with

families, the Family Wellness Team is experienced in providing trauma-informed support in the areas of targeted case management, crisis intervention and prevention, risk and needs assessment, and safety planning. The team conducts crisis and safety assessments for the family and children and provides appropriate community resources and referrals, as necessary.

The Family Wellness Team continues to expand their knowledge and competency by attending professional development courses and conferences to best support our families and their dynamic situations. The team collaborates and partners with community agencies to offer supplemental training throughout the program year on topics such as the benefits of support systems and healthy relationships to Head Start families.

In addition to City of San Antonio DHS Mental Wellness staff, Communities in Schools (CIS-SA) Parent & Child Emotional (PACE) Wellness Program provides education and support to SAISD Head Start students and families by helping them develop healthy coping skills and prioritize mental wellness. The team is comprised of both Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Master Social Workers who provide support to students in the school setting such as case management, group services, as well as individual counseling to students and families.

Family Service Association of San Antonio, Inc., Early Childhood Wellbeing Program (FSA-ECWB) is comprised of one licensed mental health professional that provides support to classrooms, parents, teachers, and/or children with mental wellness related services. Child mental health consultation and services are provided through classroom observations and interventions in collaboration with teaching staff and other school personnel. Consultation and mental health support services to families of children that have been referred include support such as home visits, campus visits, and individual or group sessions for students. Training may also be provided on specific classroom management and behavior management techniques and strategies for teachers

and assistants.

DHS Early Head Start Program Wellness Services

The EHS Program continues to work with First Three Years and the Pyramid Model to provide a series of professional development that focuses on trauma informed care concepts, strategies to scaffold the learning opportunities to classroom teachers, home visitors and family support staff.

Wellness services are an integral part of a trauma informed approach. The EHS Program continues to strengthen the three-tiered approach to provide wellness services for the program: Tier 1: Promotion – Nurturing and Responsive Relationships and High-Quality Supportive, Tier 2: Prevention – Target Social- Emotional Supports, and Tier 3: Individualized Intervention.

Wellness strategies that support Tiers 1 & 2 (Promotion and Prevention) are provided throughout each program year to include training and professional development on the importance of self-care, setting up classroom environments to support a child’s emotional self-regulation, parenting education that promote the use of positive parenting practices, and opportunities for parents to network and connect with other parents in the program.

The EHS Program contracts with a community-based agency, Family Service Association, to provide Tier 3: Individualized Intervention services by a licensed mental health professional to staff, children, and families in need of support.

DHS Head Start Program staff continues to promote Mental Health First Aid training for all DHS staff to prepare for responding to families and staff in crisis. In addition, DHS Head Start Program staff supervisors continue to participate in Reflective Supervision Consultation (RCS) facilitated by First Three Years. The focus around this work is an effort that front line staff will benefit from the practices and therefore better serve the families and incorporate the strategies in

their work with the families. Work will continue through the 2024-2025 program year.

8. Family and Community Engagement (see 1302 Subpart E):

At the time of this application, there have been no revisions to this section. DHS Head Start Family Support Services promote family well-being, strong parent-child relationships, and the ongoing learning and development of the children and their families. The Head Start Program achieves these three outcomes by providing supports and services responsive to families expressed needs and through collaboration with the parents. Family support staff utilize various processes and activities to facilitate achievement of positive family outcomes that align with the Parent Family Community Engagement (PFCE) Framework.

DHS' Head Start Family Support Team continues to build rapport with families by conducting home visits, utilizing the family assessment, the collaborative family goal setting process, offering resources and referrals, providing parent engagement opportunities, and communicating with parents in their preferred language.

The DHS Head Start Program offers parent education aimed at supporting parent-child relationships, child development, family literacy, and language development. Various opportunities are available for parents to participate in the research-based parenting curriculum, ReadyRosie, while engaging in our program. Members of the DHS Head Start Mental Wellness Team and the Family Support Team attended training in the Triple P parent education curriculum as a part of a collaboration with the city's health authority and other community agencies in order to bring the multi-tiered parenting curriculum to Head Start families and to make Triple P one of the identified parenting curricula for the city along with Ready Rosie.

Triple P supports all parents in learning skills to make parenting easier so families can spend time enjoying each other and less time managing behaviors that challenge. Healthy relationships,

setting boundaries and recognizing emotions are tenets within the Triple P program. Triple P offers evidence-based tools, trained facilitators, and many different workshops to meet the needs of families.

A key strength of the DHS Head Start Program continues to be the collaborations with community partners that are deeply rooted and committed to San Antonio's center city. They are known and trusted allies for DHS Head Start Program families and have additional resources and expertise to offer meaningful support in the face of life's biggest challenges. Referrals may be for mental wellness services, parent education, and/or learning opportunities which are provided through community offerings such as workshops, meetings, and events. In addition, parents/guardians are surveyed at the beginning of the program year to determine topics of interest in addition to the best days and times to host events.

9. Services for Children with Disabilities (1302 Subpart F):

The DHS Head Start Program continues to have procedures in place to prioritize the recruitment of children with disabilities and to ensure identification of undiagnosed disabilities after enrollment. The approach to serving children with unique needs is guided by the belief that inclusion is a value and enhances the program for all children.

The DHS Head Start Pre-K Program, SAISD, and EISD view services to children with disabilities as an area where DHS Head Start Program's partnerships within the public school setting offer a strategic advantage. School district experts in special education for Pre-k children with unique needs are either on the premises where Head Start Pre-K children attend school or on a neighboring campus, which makes it easier for DHS Head Start Program staff, special education personnel, and parents of children with disabilities to build relationships and work as partners on the development, implementation, and revisions of federally mandated Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Together with parents, the Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) Committee makes a

determination as to the best placement for each child with a disability and the most appropriate curriculum and assessment for each child. All children with an identified disability are enrolled in an inclusive classroom setting.

The EHS Program will continue relationships within the community to recruit children with disabilities. The primary methods used are a) developing and distributing materials that implicitly state that all children with disabilities are welcome to apply; b) working with the Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECI), Part C to inform parents of the availability of EHS; and c) engaging EISD's Special Education and Child Find staff in publicizing EHS availability. The DHS EHS Program maintains cooperative agreements with the three Bexar County ECI providers (Easter Seals, Brighton Center, and the Center for Health Care Services) to streamline referrals and follow up. Early Head Start Program staff continue to work with parents to discuss the benefits of early intervention services and provide resources and referrals for alternative options for intervention services.

Concerted efforts were put in place to support teaching/home visiting staff through professional development, technical assistance, and one-on-one mentoring to expand their knowledge base and offer strategies for providing meaningful learning opportunities for children with varying abilities.

Through a multi-year collaboration with the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA), Project EARLY was launched during the 2023-2024 program year at the EHS site. The purpose of the project is to increase the quantity and quality of culturally responsive early childhood specialists (i.e., board certified behavior analyst and school psychologists) trained to identify and provide interventions for infants and toddlers at-risk for or diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Graduate level scholars are assigned to a classroom to specifically support the teachers

where a child or children are diagnosed or suspected of having a disability. The scholars support the teachers through the provision of evidence-based intervention strategies. Work will continue in the 2025-2026 program year.

The DHS Head Start Program continues to offer the highest quality professional development for all DHS Head Start Program staff as the program serves a higher population of children with varying abilities. The approach to professional development in this area includes evidence-based practices with content focused on specific research-based teaching intervention practices with embedded inclusion strategies.

10. Transition (see 1302 Subpart G):

At the time of this application, there have been no revisions to this section. Transitions bring change into the lives of children and families. DHS Head Start Program staff implement strategies and practices to support successful transitions for children and their families. In addition to transitioning children from EHS into Head Start, other Pre-K programs, and children from Head Start into kindergarten or other Early Childhood Development programs, the DHS Head Start Program considers the changes that occur when children enter the program, move from class to class, move from campus to campus, or when children move to any other program as important transitions.

For the Early Head Start Program, transition planning begins six months before the child turns three within the EHS Program. EHS parents receive a transition letter informing them of their child's upcoming transition at the end of the program year from EHS into Head Start or other Pre-K programs. Parents of transitioning children are invited to attend a meeting where they are provided with information regarding the Head Start Preschool Program. Head Start team members from SAISD and EISD are in attendance to answer questions regarding children with disabilities, school

locations and opportunities to tour the school. In addition, family support staff work with families to ensure that applications for the Head Start Pre-K program are completed, and any additional resources or referrals are provided.

In both the Head Start Pre-K and EHS programs, teachers address transitions during the beginning of the year Home Visit, as well at the end of year Parent/Teacher Conference. Head Start Pre-K teachers incorporate various activities into their lesson plans, such as center activities, read-alouds about changes, and writing activities about new experiences.

11. Services to Enrolled Pregnant Women (see 1302 Subpart H):

Not Applicable.

12. Transportation (see 1303 Subpart F):

At the time of this application, there have been no revisions to this section. The Head Start Prek Program provides transportation services through the established partnership with Edgewood ISD and San Antonio ISD for students that live more than two miles from their assigned home campus, qualify through McKinney-Vento Services or IDEA, or attend an early childhood center.

The Education Service Providers provide Head Start transportation services, including field trips, and each vehicle used to transport children enrolled in the Head Start Pre-k Program is equipped with height and weight-appropriate child safety restraint systems and includes a bus monitor.

The DHS Head Start Program offers bus passes for Head Start Pre-K and EHS families who do not have transportation services available through the school districts. Additionally, teachers promote age-appropriate pedestrian and school bus safety for children and their families and document activities annually in their classroom lesson plans.

Sub-Section C: Governance, Organizational, and Management Structures

1. Governance (see 45 CFR Part 1301 and Section 642(c)-(d) in the

Act): Structure

The City of San Antonio Mayor and City Council, DHS Head Start Program Governing Body, oversees a public entity and are selected to their positions by public election. For this reason, the DHS Head Start Program’s Governing Body is exempt from composition requirements, as stated in Section 642(c) of the Head Start Act.

The DHS Head Start Program Policy Council (HSPC) is composed of twenty-four members, with DHS Head Start Program parents of currently enrolled children representing 83% of the Council. San Antonio ISD Head Start Pre-K has eight parent representatives (four primary and four alternates), EISD Head Start Pre-K has four parent representatives (two primary and two alternates), and EISD EHS has four parent representatives (two primary and two alternates) which include center based and home based representation, EHS-Child Care Partnership has four parent representatives (two primary and two alternates), and four Community Representatives (two primary and two alternates), which are elected from the community at large by the HSPC parents to serve on the Council.

Governing Body Processes

The City of San Antonio, City Council as our governing body, has the legal and fiscal responsibility to administer and oversee the DHS Head Start Program. The Governing Body ensures objectivity in monitoring the program’s progress in meeting Head Start Performance Standards and internal program mandates as well as ensuring that program goals and objectives tie into a larger community vision for early childhood education services.

While the City of San Antonio’s City Council must maintain its legal and fiscal responsibilities, per Head Start standards, it has authorized the Bexar County Community Action Advisory Board (CAAB) to oversee other key programmatic responsibilities. The Governing

Body, the Governing Body Advisory Committee (CAAB), and the HSPC members partner with each other and key management staff to develop, review, and approve DHS Head Start Program policies and planning items. The CAAB is charged with oversight of specific DHS Head Start Program functions and receives monthly fiscal and program reports which are provided one week prior to the scheduled meeting. DHS Head Start Program Administrator and Program Managers present reports to ensure the Governing Body and HSPC carry out their responsibilities as stated in Section 642(c) of the Head Start Act, to include review and approval of annual items. Training opportunities are provided to the Governing Body, the Governing Body Advisory Committee (CAAB), and Policy Council throughout the year and decision-making items are presented for program development, budget and policy, and community advocacy.

The Finance Department, City Attorney's Office, and Department of Human Services provide legal, fiscal, and management expertise. Grant applications, service provider allocations, and all contracts over \$50,000.00 require City Council approval.

Policy Council

The current governance structure allows for parent participation in policy making and other programmatic decisions focused on planning, general procedures, and human resources management. In accordance with Section 642(c) (1) and Section 642(c) (2) of the Head Start Act mandating the HSPC be involved in these three focus areas, items are reviewed and approved at monthly scheduled meetings. The HSPC is responsible for the direction of the DHS Head Start Program. To ensure adequate program governance and informed decision making, the program provides regular ongoing communication to the HSPC. As a part of this system, the program provides monthly reporting that includes information on correspondence (from HHS

and other), program operations, and fiscal expenditures. The DHS Head Start Program requires HSPC approval on program planning, policies, and grant applications and provides updates on the program's progress. Policy Council meetings are currently held in-person on the fourth Tuesday of every month.

Parent Committees

The DHS Head Start Program schedules regular Parent Connection Committee (PCC) meetings at each site. This school year, PCC meetings began September 2024, to maintain a governing structure that ensures two-way communication between parents and the Policy Council. Parents have the opportunity to become Parent Leaders. The Parent Leader option is to assist with building leadership skills, provide free workshops, trainings, and community events opportunities to families in the program. The PCC meeting agendas have a standing item to obtain parent input on recommendations for the program during each meeting. Family support staff survey parents, at the beginning of the program year, to determine topics parents are most interested in and then coordinate those presentations. The Head Start Program holds PCC meetings at each campus and center. At these meetings, parents discuss concerns, successes, ideas to improve the program and training on topics that are important to them and their families. When relevant input is obtained during PCC meetings, the information is forwarded to the HSPC for their consideration. After the HSPC meets each month, the agendas and minutes of each meeting are posted on Parent Boards at each site. This process promotes two-way communication with parents in the program.

Additionally, parents of enrolled DHS Head Start Program children are invited to participate in the Self-Assessment reporting and Strategic Planning events where they are

encouraged to provide their thoughts on how the program is doing and suggest future goals for the program. Parent input impacts policies, activities, and services.

Relationships

The Governing Body and the HSPC are provided a thorough DHS Head Start new member orientation and training on their responsibilities as stated in Section 642(c) of the Head Start Act, and the Head Start Program Performance Standards. Ongoing trainings and technical assistance are provided to the Governing Body and the HSPC to ensure that members understand the information presented, effectively oversee and participate in the program. Governing Body members receive ongoing monitoring results, data on programmatic and school readiness goals, and monthly reports on services rendered to ensure high quality services.

The DHS Head Start Program details the need to avoid conflict of interest in the DHS Head Start Policy Council bylaws. Parent/legal guardians of currently enrolled children, as well as community members seeking a position on the HSPC, must not have financial conflicts of interest: be personally employed or have an immediate family member employed with the program nor receive compensation for providing services to the program.

The Governing Body and HSPC are provided program items to review and approve monthly. The Governing Body advisory committee members are invited to attend the monthly HSPC meetings and the HSPC members are invited to attend monthly Governing Body advisory committee meetings. The DHS Head Start Program has put in place well thought out impasse procedures that have been approved by the City of San Antonio City Council, the governing body advisory committee (CAAB) and the HSPC. The impasse procedure provides steps to be taken in the event that there is a disagreement on how to proceed with a decision that governs the program. The procedure details meaningful collaboration efforts towards coming to a joint

decision.

2. Human Resources Management (see 1302 Subpart I):

The DHS Head Start Program maintains an organizational chart to display the management and staffing structure including all of DHS Head Start Program staff, the DHS Director, and the DHS Fiscal staff. The DHS Head Start Program collaborates with the City of San Antonio's Human Resources Department to ensure all newly hired DHS Head Start Program staff complies with and has completed the criminal background checks prior to employment. According to the City of San Antonio's Administrative Directive (AD) 4.55, the City of San Antonio conducts Criminal Background Checks (CBC) as part of the initial employment process, employee placement into safety or security sensitive positions and positions of trust, and engagement of volunteers and interns. Edgewood ISD and San Antonio ISD ensure all employees and substitutes submit fingerprint identification information to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) before beginning employment. In addition, EHS Program staff ensures new employees meet Child Care Regulations Minimum Standards upon hire and ongoing to stay in compliance with both Minimum Standards and HSPPS.

The DHS Head Start Program and its partners continue to analyze how our organizations' pay structures will continue to ensure a stable workforce. For example, after feedback from EISD EHS Teachers, EISD has changed the way EHS Teachers are paid by moving to biweekly pay checks from a monthly paycheck schedule. We feel this change will improve teacher retention in our EHS Program. In addition, DHS Head Start is committed to moving towards pay equity through continued conversations and plans for reduction in slots/change in scope applications in the future. This will enable our program to comply with the newly established performance standards around

equitable pay.

All new staff receive DHS Head Start Program orientation, training, and technical assistance to include a review of the Head Start Program Performance Standards, Head Start Act, City of San Antonio Administrative Directives, CORE Values, Head Start Standards of Conduct, Head Start Program Governance, and a program overview.

The DHS Head Start Program partners with both SAISD and EISD to provide a comprehensive approach to professional development for all staff and teachers. This includes in-person trainings and webinars to build knowledge based on interest and assignments. In addition to trainings and webinars organized and provided by the DHS Head Start Program and each school district, our approach to Professional Development also includes attendance at conferences and workshops offered at the local, state, regional, and national level.

In partnership with SAISD and EISD, Head Start Pre-K provides a coordinated coaching strategy for teachers. The program utilizes the Practice Based Coaching Model with a focus on supporting individual teacher needs. District-level coaching specialists, with a degree in early childhood education and training in adult learning and data analysis, follow a cyclical individualized model which includes observations of the teacher, setting goals and planning, modeling or co-teaching, and reflective conversations that provide specific and effective feedback about goals and implementation. When a need is determined, intensive coaching is provided by frequent and consistent cycles of the coaching model as well as the development of an individualized coaching plan that supports the development of necessary skills for providing quality teaching interactions and promoting positive student outcomes.

Early Head Start Program staff implement the Together Learning and Collaborating (TLC), a group format practice-based coaching model promoted by The National Center on Quality

Teaching and Learning (NCQTL), to support teachers for intensive coaching. Participants meet for twenty sessions and each session focuses on teaching practices using video recording, reflection, group and individual feedback.

Teaching Strategies Fidelity tools are completed to assess every EHS Program teacher and their level of curriculum understanding and implementation. Based on the results, identified peer coaches utilize the Coaching to Fidelity Guide to individualize coaching strategies and support teachers in using curriculum. Training and technical assistance is offered by DHS EHS Early Education Services Mentors to support peer coaches and teachers in using Creative Curriculum with fidelity and Coaching to Fidelity. Support is provided to peer coaches to strengthen coaching strategies to support curriculum implementation.

3. Program Management and Quality Improvement (see 1302 Subpart J):

The Head Start Pre-K Program uses a two-tiered quality assurance system, direct and indirect, to ensure program compliance at all levels. The Head Start Pre-K Program is responsible for the monitoring of SAISD and EISD (direct monitoring) and reviewing and validating results of the ISDs monitoring activities (indirect monitoring). In addition, the EHS Program uses a three-level quality assurance system to ensure program compliance at all levels: 1) Texas Child Care Regulation inspections completed for both Blessed Sacrament Academy and Stafford ECC Early Head Start sites, (2) Provider staff conducts monitoring of staff direct services, and (3) DHS Early Head Start Staff conducts monitoring of both locations.

The Head Start Program's quality assurance system allows for multiple levels of review and continuous program improvement. The monitoring methods include on-site announced and unannounced visits, coordinator interviews, ChildPlus reports, questionnaires, and surveys. The DHS Head Start Program staff collect and use data from the Self-Assessment and ongoing

monitoring tools to make any recommended policy and procedures changes and informs the Policy Council and Governing Body. This year's direct monitoring projects conducted on-site emphasized environmental health and safe environments. This monitoring addressed any areas needing improvement including increased safety awareness. The DHS Head Start Program remains committed to providing quality services and achieving our monitoring goals. Ongoing monitoring provides data needed to evaluate compliance with the HSPPS and make recommendations to improve the level of program service.

Communication is central to quality leadership and management of the DHS Head Start Program. Weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual meetings are held with all staff, regularly scheduled with individual staff members, small groups, and the full staff. Staff are held accountable for their results and annually evaluated accordingly. Staff have access to relevant professional development throughout the year including trauma informed practices, reflective supervision, mental health first aid along with other training to support relationship building and promote staff retention. The training and technical assistance components of the grant assure the building of staff capacity and well-being.

During the past year, there have been no internal controls findings/issues identified. DHS Head Start Program self-assessment is included as an attachment with discussion around program improvement activities.