



Education Requirements for Human Resources Professionals



Staff Qualifications: Steps for Programs to Consider

Follow these steps to help guide you in the process of determining and justifying how your Head Start HR professional meets the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS).

1. Read the HSPPS:
 - o Know the specific education requirements for staff roles detailed in [45 CFR §1302.91](#)
 - o Review the cross references to the staff qualification requirements in the [Head Start Act](#) and other relevant [HSPPS](#)
2. Gather information to know your program's needs and expectations, based on:
 - o Community, family, and child needs
 - o Program goals including school readiness goals
 - o Your existing continuous quality improvement system
3. Use all available information to ensure your program has:
 - o Human resources and professional development policies and procedures to help meet minimum regulatory compliance and move toward excellence
 - o Clear program goals including school readiness goals
 - o Qualified staff who can effectively support your program's goals and service delivery
 - o An ongoing monitoring process that identifies and addresses challenges in hiring and retaining qualified staff



What Are the Requirements?*

*For full text, access the [HSPPS](#) and [Head Start Act](#)

Knowledge

A program should assess staffing needs in line with the human resource complexity of the organization and applicable human resources requirements. It should secure the regularly scheduled or ongoing services of an HR professional with sufficient education and experience to meet its needs.

For HR professionals to perform their job functions effectively, they need to have three critical types of skills.

People Knowledge

- Acquire and develop the talent necessary to pursue organizational goals
- Maintain a satisfied and engaged workforce while minimizing unwanted employee turnover
- Develop a total rewards program that maximizes the effectiveness of the organization's compensation and benefits

Organizational Knowledge

- Create and set the strategic direction of the HR function that is fully aligned to organizational goals
- Ensure that the organization's talent pool has the skills and capabilities to achieve organizational goals
- Promote positive relationships with employees
- Leverage technology to improve HR functioning

Workplace Knowledge

- Manage the workforce to achieve organizational objectives
Manage organizational risks and threats to the safety and security of employees
- Contribute to the well-being and betterment of the community
- Comply with applicable laws and regulations

Competencies

[45 CFR §1302.91\(a\)](#) A program must:

- Ensure all staff, consultants, and contractors...have sufficient knowledge, training and experience, and competencies to:
 - Fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions
 - Ensure high-quality service delivery
- Provide ongoing training and professional development to support staff in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities..."



There are many knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics (KSAOs) that HR professionals need to perform their functions effectively. They include:

Leadership and Navigation: Create a compelling vision and mission for HR that aligns with the strategic direction and culture of the organization to accomplish HR and organizational goals, lead and promote organizational change, navigate the organization, and manage the implementation and execution of HR initiatives

Ethical Practice: Maintain high levels of personal and professional integrity and act as an ethical agent who promotes core values, integrity, and accountability throughout the organization

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I): Create a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, feel a sense of belonging, and use their unique backgrounds and characteristics to contribute fully to the organization's success

Relationship Management: Create and maintain a network of professional contacts within and outside of the organization, build and maintain relationships, work as an effective member of a team, and manage conflict while supporting the organization

Analytical Aptitude: Collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data, interpret and promote findings that evaluate HR initiatives and inform business decisions and recommendations

Please Note!

Recipients have the flexibility to implement higher or more stringent requirements than those outlined in the regulation.

What Else Do I Need to Know?

- Programs have the flexibility to determine how a baccalaureate degree in human resources, business, communications, or a related field meets the requirements for this position.
- Programs can contract services for human resources management. If contracting this service, the contracted entity must meet the exact same requirements as an employee. The contract must detail the specifications as required by your program.



Considerations for Hiring Staff

- Programs should consider pertinent qualities when hiring, such as whether the candidate has:
 - The skills necessary to exercise prudent stewardship of program resources by making decisions based on human resources data and applicable federal, state, and program financial requirements
 - The skills necessary to minimize the program's fiscal and legal risks by assessing exposure to liability, improving internal controls, and other program practices, and training staff and monitoring their compliance with requirements
 - The skills necessary to recruit talented employees and volunteers; manage onboarding, training and professional development; manage salary and benefits packages and staff health and wellness initiatives
 - The skills necessary to carry out HR management tasks, such as: track payroll, handle employee grievances, retain effective employees, plan for succession
 - Deep knowledge of HR management research outcomes and ability to consider and adopt as appropriate evolving practices in the HR field
 - Critical thinking skills
 - Ability to ensure a safe workplace culture
- Consider requirements detailed within the state/territory early care and education system (e.g., licensing requirements, requirements included within the Quality Rating and Improvement System).
- Access the Head Start training and technical assistance system and Regional Office program professionals as needed for guidance in hiring and managing HR professionals.

Considerations for Professional Development

- Programs must ensure that the HR professional uses professional development to increase the knowledge and skills needed to provide high-quality, comprehensive services within the scope of their job responsibilities.
- Programs must ensure the HR professional is trained on methods to handle suspected or known child abuse and neglect cases in compliance with applicable federal, state, local, and tribal laws.
- Provides employees with continuous learning opportunities, including opportunities for upskilling and reskilling.



Where Can I Find More on This Topic?

- [Head Start Regulations](#)
 - [Program Performance Standards on Staff Qualifications and Competency Requirements](#)
 - [The Showcase of Head Start Regulations on Staff Qualifications](#)
 - [Head Start Program Performance Standards Excerpts on Staff Qualifications](#)
 - [Sec. 648A of the Head Start Act on Staff Qualifications and Development](#)
- [Foundations for Excellence: A Guide for Five-Year Planning and Continuous Improvement](#)
- [SHRM Body of Applied Skills and Knowledge](#)