

HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS

- All participants are in listen-only mode.
- Certificates of Attendance will not be provided.
- Closed Captioning is optional.
- Participate in discussion via chat.
- Submit all questions via Q&A.

Participate in discussion with the presenters here.



Ask your questions here.

Closed Captions can be turned on or off here.



OFFICE OF HEAD START

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families



Webinar 2: Moving Forward for ERSEA Success

6/25/2021

Today's Session Overview

- **Office of Head Start** Q&A
- The National Centers on Program Management and Fiscal Operations (**PMFO**) and Parent, Family, and Community Engagement (**PFCE**) builds on existing knowledge of ERSEA to—
 - ✓ *Enhance the understanding of building thoughtful and supportive systems;*
 - ✓ *Make use of Program Planning Cycle as a tool that embraces the importance of data;*
 - ✓ *Elaborate on ERSEA as a continuum of services that reflects a systematic approach and emphasizes the interconnectedness;*
 - ✓ *Emphasize the importance of building and sustaining relationships with families and community partners; and*
 - ✓ *Offer foundational and innovative strategies that support our goal of being fully enrolled.*
- Wrap-up and close

Today's Presenters

- **Dr. Bernadine Futrell** — *Director, OHS*
- **Ann Linehan** — *Deputy Director, OHS*
- **Heather Wanderski** — *Director, Program Operations Division, OHS*
- **David Jones** — *Senior Program Specialist/FPO, OHS*
- **Karen Surprenant** — *Program Management & Governance Specialist, NC PMFO*
- **Brandi Black-Thacker** — *Director of Integrated Services, NC PFCE*
- **Nicole Holman-Alexander** — *Program Management & Governance Specialist, NC PMFO*



If programs cannot accommodate all children with in-person services 5 days per week, can programs provide some days in-person and some days remote/virtual for each child?

Programs should transition children served virtually or remotely to in-person services as soon as possible, depending on local conditions. However, OHS will allow flexibility through Dec. 31, 2021. During this ramp-up period, programs may deliver virtual or remote services to some enrolled children and families, if local health conditions necessitate or if the program is meeting individualized needs. This includes options such as providing a combination of in-person and virtual services for individual children, if necessary, to meet health and safety guidelines.

Programs are reminded that they must communicate with their Regional Office about the continued use of virtual or remote services for some enrolled children during fall of 2021. OHS anticipates that programs should be able to fully return to their pre-approved in-person program options by January 2022. For PY 2021–2022, it is unallowable to have a program option run entirely by technology or through delivery of educational material to children’s homes. The use of virtual or remote services for children’s comprehensive educational services is considered an interim strategy in the presence of an emergency or disaster and will not be approved as a locally designed program option.

§1302.15 **Enrollment**
§1302.20(b) **Comprehensive services** §1302.20
Determining program option

If a grantee is unable to serve its full enrollment in the fall, during the ramp up period, does the grantee need to submit a temporary reduction in enrollment?

Programs should not request a temporary enrollment reduction if they are unable to serve their full enrollment in the fall. Programs also should not request a temporary enrollment reduction if they are providing a combination of in-person and virtual services to children during the ramp-up period in fall of 2021.

§1302.15 Enrollment



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What are allowable virtual program enhancements?

This table provides examples of allowable virtual services, which include, but are not limited to:

Virtual Services for Flexible Use Only During the Ramp-up Period	Virtual Services for Flexible Use During Ramp-up and Indefinitely
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home-based socializations• Parent-teacher home visits• Educational services for children, in select cases and in consultation with the Regional Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy Council meetings• Governing body meetings• Parenting curricula meetings• Parent meetings• Home visits for medically fragile children• Intakes• Coaching Software

If programs are serving a reduced number of children, is a program's over-income percentage based on the program's current capacity or their total funded enrollment?

The 10% of over-income enrollment is based on the program's actual enrollment. Programs should use the number of children actually enrolled rather than funded enrollment to calculate this percentage.

We know programs need to be able to plan for over-income slots and that is more easily accomplished using the funded enrollment. However, when programs' actual enrollment differs greatly from funded enrollment, the number of over-income slots should be based on actual to remain consistent with the intent of the law. OHS recognizes that enrollment numbers may fluctuate during the ramp-up period and will not be penalizing programs as they navigate this period.

The pandemic has created and exacerbated long-standing disparities and inequities for families who have been marginalized for decades. The number of children and families in poverty has grown significantly during this time and OHS recognizes that prioritizing low-income families is especially needed to ensure we are serving children and families with the greatest needs.

1302.12 (c,d) **Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility**

Do unemployment benefits count as family income? Are the additional unemployment benefits provided through COVID-related funds handled differently?

The first \$10,200 of unemployment benefit payments received in 2020 is no longer taxable, so grantees may use an unemployment statement to calculate annual income, and then subtract the first \$10,200 (since it would not be reflected as income on the IRS 1040). Programs would need to maintain documentation of the calculation and make sure it is in your ERSEA procedures for the 2020 year.

For families currently receiving unemployment payments, there is a \$300/week federal increase in payments until Sept. 6, 2021. This increase is not available in all states. The additional increase, also referred to as “extra,” should also not be considered for income eligibility. The 1099-G forms do not have a separate distinction between regular unemployment and the additional increase, so programs will need to show their calculations when factoring that additional increase out of the unemployment income.

§1302.12 Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility

How should programs verify that unemployment was due to the pandemic? Is parent attestation sufficient?

Parent attestation is a sufficient way to verify that unemployment was due to the pandemic. Because the 1099-G forms do not differentiate between regular unemployment and the additional increase due to COVID-19, programs will have to rely on the attestation. Programs should maintain documentation of this attestation for their records.

§1302.12 **Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility**

What should programs do if enrolled/returning families do not want to participate in in-person services?

As programs work toward full enrollment consistent with their approved program option beginning in PY 2021-2022, the priority is to enroll children and families who are most in need of in-person services. In-person slots cannot be held for families who have decided they do not want their child to return to an in-person service/program.

During the ramp-up period toward full in-person enrollment, programs may consider using CARES, CRRSA, or ARP Act funds to temporarily provide virtual and remote services, in any program option, for currently enrolled families who may need more time before returning to in-person services. Program communications with families should be clear that these virtual services are a temporary approach for use during the program's ramp-up period and will be discontinued at the end of the calendar year. Programs should not guarantee that in-person slots will be available if/when a family feels ready to return to in-person services. Programs and families may opt for regular check-in points to reassess a family's readiness to return, and if at a time that a family is ready, and there is no slot available, families should be added to the waitlist. If toward the end of the program's ramp-up period families continue to express hesitancy for in-person services, staff and families should explore alternative placements that will better meet families' needs for virtual services.

§1302.15(a) Funded enrollment

Some programs have a particular challenge in finding education staff (teachers, home visitors, etc.) with the right qualifications. How can programs address this challenge?

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff have been long-standing challenges in early childhood education. OHS supports and values the Head Start workforce and recognizes that each staff member plays a critical role in the delivery of a high-quality Head Start program and in meeting the goal of returning to full in-person comprehensive services. OHS recognizes that education and child development staff have a very demanding job with many important responsibilities. Programs should carefully examine and assess why they are struggling to find and retain qualified education staff and develop plans to address those challenges. Input from current and prospective employees is key for understanding the full picture of challenges with staff recruitment and retention. OHS also encourages all programs to re-examine the kinds of supports they have in place for staff and consider additional supports that could be added with COVID funds.

To address staffing challenges, programs may consider hiring individuals as teaching assistants or aides and work with those individuals to develop a plan for achieving the required degree or credential to move into a lead teaching position. Programs can use Head Start funding to off-set costs for staff associated with obtaining a degree or credential. Programs are strongly encouraged to work with interested parents and assist them with achieving necessary credentials to move into a teaching or other staff position. Programs are also encouraged to reach out to and/or partner with a local community college or university to see what flexibilities can be offered to staff who are seeking their degree while also working full-time, such as offering courses on-site at the program.

§1302.91 Staff qualifications and competency requirements

Can programs use American Rescue Plan (ARP) or other COVID relief funding to support staff?

Yes, programs can use ARP and other sources of COVID relief funding to provide supports for staff. Specific examples are provided in more detail in [ACF-PI-HS-21-03](#):

- **Planning sessions for staff.** Preparing for a return to in-person comprehensive services starts by ensuring everyone has the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to operate effectively. COVID relief funding can be used to invest in planning sessions to prepare for the ramp-up to full in-person services in the summer and fall.
- **Staff wellness and mental health support.** Conduct employee wellness surveys or engage in other data collection to better understand the needs of team members. Increase access to mental health consultation and therapy services for staff, contract with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and institute a comprehensive staff wellness program that includes activities such as mindfulness breaks and opportunity for self-reflection.
- **Additional staff.** Hire additional classroom staff and/or floaters to meet physical distancing requirements or reduce group size and to ensure all staff receive an adequate break during their day. Full-time floaters reduce the need to bring in outside substitutes.
- **Professional learning and development for staff.** Provide professional learning experiences on key topics such as equity, diversity, inclusion, bias, economic mobility, trauma-skilled practices, and other topics.
- **Other personnel costs.** Offer fringe benefits and expanded leave (vacation, family-related, sick or military), employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. We will discuss this in more detail in the next question.
- **Vaccine support.** Provide transportation assistance to vaccination sites and temporary coverage to allow absence from the workplace for vaccination. Offer paid time off, sick leave, or other paid leave for the time spent receiving vaccination and if staff members experience side effects post-vaccination.

Can programs use ARP and other sources of COVID relief funding specifically to provide hazard pay, temporary wage increases, or a bonus for staff?

Grantees have asked numerous questions about using ARP or other COVID relief funding for short-term compensation in addition to regular salary and wages, either as a hiring bonus, hazard pay, return-to-work incentive, retention bonus or temporary raise in pay. Regardless of how they are characterized, additional compensation payments are covered by the regulations noted below. Critical language for allowability is contained in 75.431(a). For Head Start grantees, compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages is allowable if it is reasonable in amount and paid subject to an established policy of the grantee. Grantees should also be prepared to address required withholdings and employer match costs for one-time and short-term compensation.

75.431(a) Fringe benefits are allowances and services provided by employers to their employees as compensation in addition to regular salaries and wages. Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (vacation, family-related, sick or military), employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. Except as provided elsewhere in these principles, the costs of fringe benefits are allowable provided that the benefits are reasonable and are required by law, non-Federal entity-employee agreement, or an established policy of the non-Federal entity.

Recruiting and retaining qualified employees, including those returning to centers for the delivery of in-person services, is an important aspect of Head Start moving forward. As grantees develop compensation plans to achieve their employment goals, it remains important to adhere to applicable fiscal regulations and general cost principles to assure allowability.

§75.431 Compensation - fringe benefits

What if some staff are hesitant to return to in-person services in the fall of 2021?

Programs must prioritize returning to full in-person comprehensive services as soon as possible, which requires sufficient qualified staff to work in-person with children. OHS recognizes that some staff may still be hesitant to return to in-person services. All programs should be developing plans and strategies now to support staff and address their individual fears or concerns – including gathering input directly from staff – as they make the transition back to full in-person services. If staff are unable to immediately return to full in-person services due to factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., lack of child care; school-age children not yet returned to full in-person schooling; fears of COVID-19 transmission), a program may consider temporary alternate roles for those staff, who continue to directly benefit the program. At the same time, programs should be working to promote staff members' return to in-person services as soon as possible. For instance, programs can implement strategies to address staff hesitancy, such as offering information on health and safety practices and/or ensuring staff have sufficient paid leave to get vaccinated. If unvaccinated staff have lingering concerns related to vaccination, programs can point staff to resources from the CDC or other authorities on the science behind vaccinations.

Programs should not delay opening classrooms for in-person services if current staff are unable or unwilling to return in-person. Programs must have policies in place about how to adequately staff their programs to meet OHS's expectation of providing comprehensive in-person services for their full funded enrollment as soon as possible and no later than January 2022.

§1302.20(b) **Determining program structure**

Organizational Resilience

Trust

Collaboration

Responsibility

Adaptability

Preparedness

Courageous Leadership

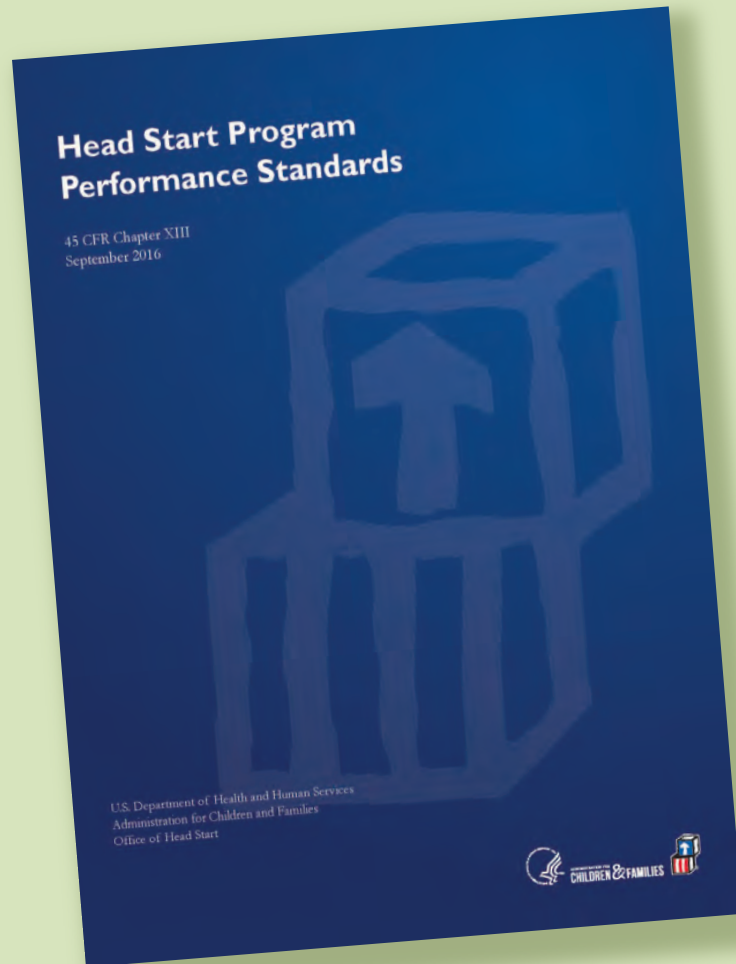


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A Management Systems Approach



45 CFR §1302.102 –
Achieving program goals

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Thoughtful program adaptations
based on solid data

.....

Modern and dynamic
recruitment processes

Planning ERSEA Services



What do we need to know about our families?

What do we need to know about the community?

What are the new and existing data sources?

Gathering Data

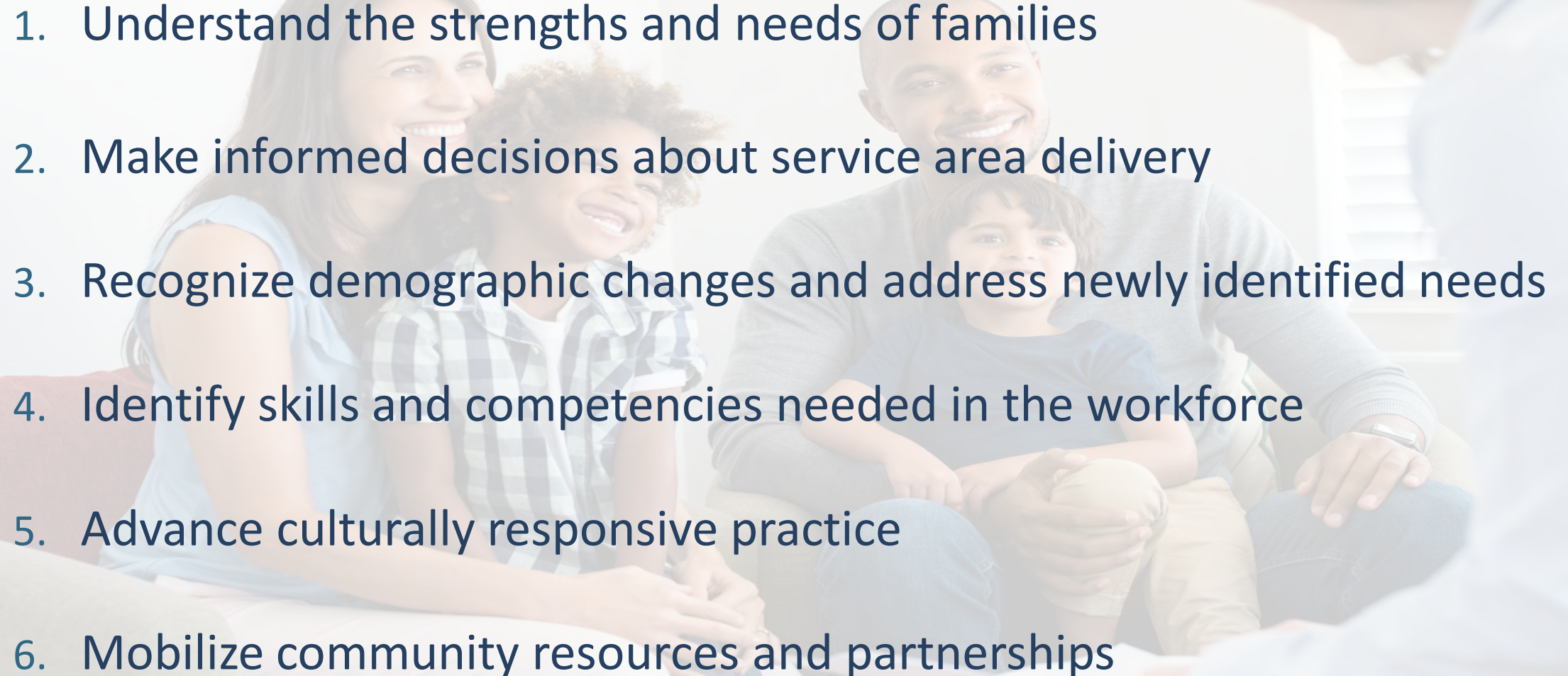
Survey

Interview

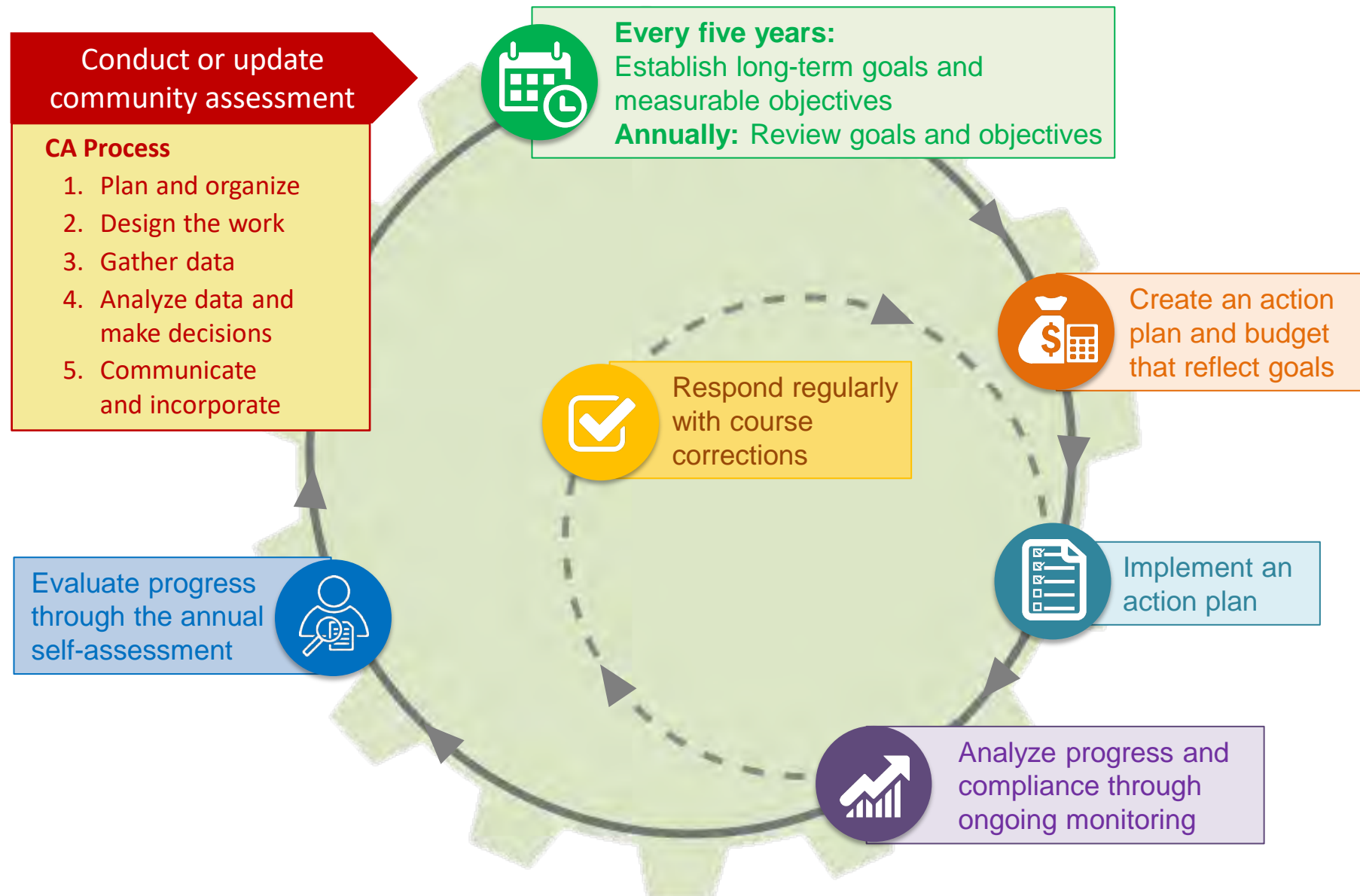
Focus Group

Large group discussion

Community Assessments Help Programs

- 
1. Understand the strengths and needs of families
 2. Make informed decisions about service area delivery
 3. Recognize demographic changes and address newly identified needs
 4. Identify skills and competencies needed in the workforce
 5. Advance culturally responsive practice
 6. Mobilize community resources and partnerships

Program Planning Cycle



ERSEA: A Continuum of Services



ERSEA: A Continuum of Services



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Program Management and Fiscal Operations

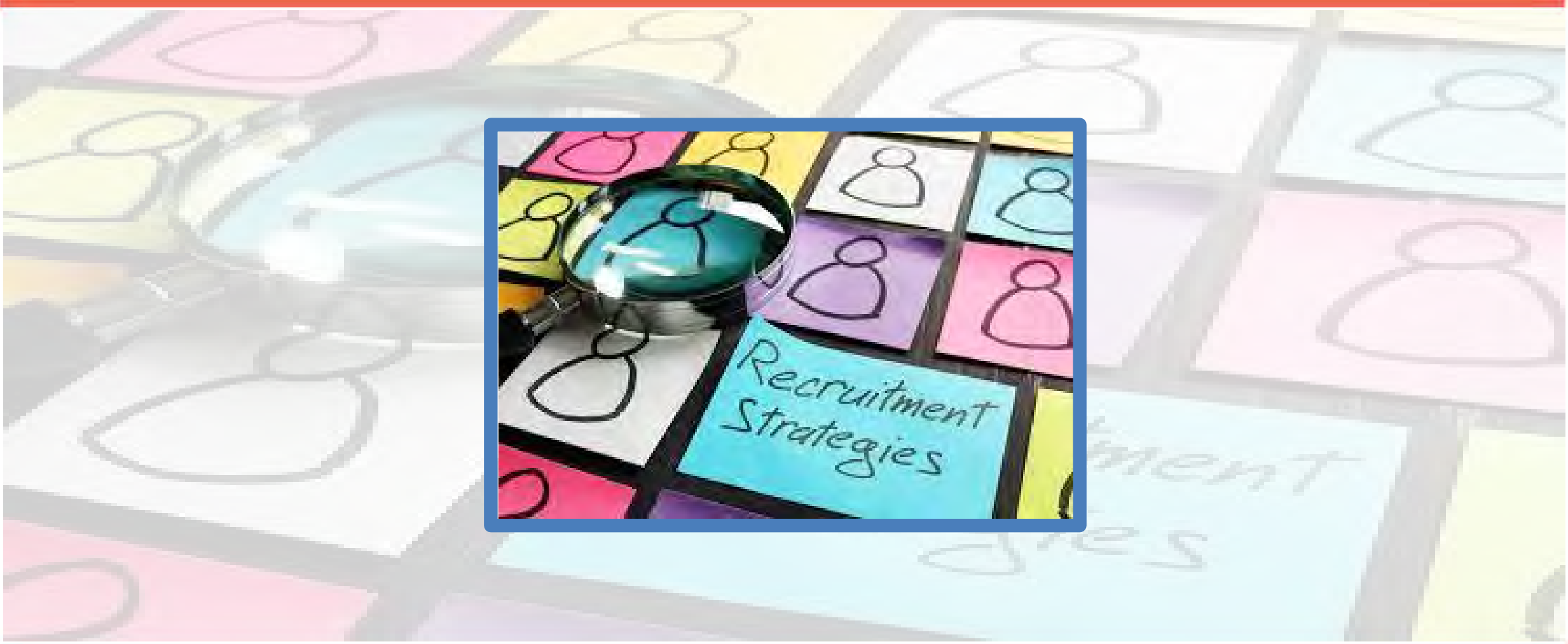


National Center on
Parent, Family, and Community Engagement



Verify
100% Income Guidelines Eligibility
Verify Regulations Duration Homeless
Duration Verify Age
Allowances Age 49% 100% Foster
Over Interview Eligibility
Enrollment Care
Eligibility Allowances 10%
Income Record Requirements Income
Eligibility Exceptions
Income

Recruitment



Recruitment



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Why Partner?

Expand innovations

ERSEA

Streamline services

Maximize funding
and resources

Increase benefits for
children and families

Leveraging Partnerships



Planning for Long-Term Investment



Resources

ERSEA Resources



Community Assessment Analysis

The community assessment process is part of program planning. It is used as a basis for making decisions, as a foundation for establishing strategic long-term goals and measurable objectives, and to inform strategic and ongoing planning. Your community assessment team can use this worksheet while collecting, reviewing data and developing recommendations.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/15-community-assessment-analysis-part-i-handout7-11-19.pdf>



Conducting Focus Groups and Large-Group Discussions

This is a guide to choosing, conducting, and facilitating different types of group discussions.

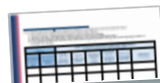
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/ca-b2-nip.pdf>



Sample Community Partner Survey

This data collection tool is a resource to share with families and community partners as part of an annual community assessment.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/ca-appendix-3.pdf>



Identifying Data and Data-Based Decisions

The community assessment team can complete this worksheet as it prepares the community assessment report.



National Center on
Program Management and Fiscal Operations



Program Planning Cycle

Planning systems occur in a continuous cycle and involve key members of the Head Start community. The outcome of this cycle is the creation of achievable goals and short-term program and fiscal objectives.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/program-planning-head-start-program-planning-cycle>



Annual Planning Calendar for Program Planning

Use this customizable roadmap to identify required planning activities and foster meaningful collaboration with program and fiscal leaders. This practical Microsoft Excel-based calendar is compliant, comprehensive, and customizable.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/program-planning/article/annual-planning-calendar-program-management>



Social Media Essentials for Getting Programs Connected

Social media can be a powerful and affordable communication tool for Head Start programs to promote services, enroll families, recruit staff, and connect with diverse communities. This interactive learning module will help programs establish engaging social media profiles on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/organizational-leadership/learning-modules/social-media-essentials-getting-head-start-programs-connected>



Using Social Media to Engage Families

Use this guide to develop and manage a social media plan to engage parents in supporting their children's learning, healthy development, and so much more.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/publication/using-social-media-engage-families>



Communication Planning for Head Start and Early Head Start Programs

External communication planning requires careful, step-by-step work by a team of people, including program leadership. This resource includes questions to promote thinking and align goals with a program's mission and strategic plan.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/communication-a-to-z-communication-planning.pdf>



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Head Start Forward

- Remain relevant and responsive—resilient
- Continue building and sustaining relationships
- Encourage “current day” innovation



Save the Dates

Head Start Forward Webinar Series

Registration information coming soon!



Mental Health and Staff Wellness

Wednesday, July 14, 2021, 1–2:30 p.m. ET

Health and Safety Considerations

Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021, 1–2:30 p.m. ET

Showcase of Grantee Best Practices on In-person Services

Wednesday, Aug. 25, 2021, 1–2:30 p.m. ET



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We'll do it together!



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Questions



