

## Office of Head Start FY2021 Monitoring Kickoff

Moderator: Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the FY21 monitoring kickoff webcast. In order to participate in the discussion or ask questions, please use the area to the left of the presentation slides that is entitled, "Ask a Question." Below the "Ask a Question" banner, there is a section where you are able to submit your questions or comments.

Right below the "Ask a Question" area, you will see a section named, "Event Resources." If you click on "Event Resources," you will be able to find the slides that are available for you to download today. And with that, I thank you for joining us. And Adia, the floor is yours.

Adia Brown: Good afternoon and good morning Head Start. How is everybody doing out there? This is Adia Brown, your Head Start monitoring lead. And I'm here today with the Deputy Director of the Office of Head Start, Ann Linehan. You want to say hi to everybody, Ann?

Ann Linehan: Did it have me on mute? Yes, I was on mute.

Adia: Say hi to everybody, Ann.

Ann: And we're thrilled that you have chosen to join us today. And I said to Adia there's gotta be a little bit of interest in this subject because there are over 3,000 people. Thank you, Adia.

Adia: You're welcome, Ann. There are 3,000 people here today. And we're so glad you're here. Now, I'm going to put my hand up. I'm going to wave at everybody. Everybody wave back. Is everybody waving? Wave back. Alright, there you go. Hi. So, today we're here to talk about the 2021 monitoring kickoff season, and I'm here with Ann Linehan because Dr. Bergeron, who has joined me for the last couple of years – she couldn't join me today. It is a holiday. It's Yom Kippur, and she's off celebrating. And so, she's unable to make it today, but if she could have been here, she would have been here, and she says hello to everyone too. So, we're going to go ahead and get started as our presenter guide said, you can use the chat box; you can actually ask lots of questions. So, we're going to start off today; we're going to kick off the 2021 season. We are going to tell you – we're going to give you an opportunity to ask questions, and this webcast is going to be available in the future. So, if you are – if you know people, they were not able to attend today – the slides to this webcast and webcast will be available. You can watch it again later.

So, let's talk about the things we're going to do today. So, today, we're going to talk about – we're going to give you some key updates. We're going to tell you what we're going to do with focus area one. We're going to talk about focus area two. CLASS – I know everybody out there wants to know something about CLASS. We're going to talk about protocol, highlights, the report structure, and navigating monitoring during the COVID-19. Ann, how's that sound to you?

Ann: Terrific.

Adia: Terrific. Alright. You're always so much fun to present with, Ann. Terrific. All right, so let's talk about FY21 and some of the highlights this year. Now, if you were – if you joined us for NHSA, you heard that all the reviews this year will be virtual.

If you weren't there, there's 3,000 of you here today, and you can tell all your friends that all the reviews that we're going to do, FA1 and FA2, are going to be virtual all year. So, the other thing that people will want to know is that CLASS is suspended until further notice. So, for this program here, we're going to suspend CLASS.

We did really ... We couldn't really find a good virtual option to perform CLASS for grantees. And we know that these CLASS reviews are so important to you guys. They're important for professional development, they're important for your program. And so, we wanted to make sure that we got the most accurate scores for you, and doing that virtually was really not an option.

And also, in our current situation and having COVID-19, you know, it's also difficult for us to really consider sending people to your program. So, for that reason, we are going to suspend CLASS until further notice. Ann, do you want to add anything about that?

Ann: No, Adia, I think everyone's probably doing a happy dance, hearing that information as they did when we shared it with NHSA.

Adia: Yeah, there was a lot of happy dances in the chat room. So, the other thing that folks would want to know is: "When are we going to start monitoring?" That's the question that you guys always ask? So, this year we're starting a little late. We usually start in October, but this year, we're going to start the FA1 reviews in November. So, we're only starting FA1 reviews in November. And as people know, those are the reviews that we call you, we do on the phone. FA2 is going to be the same this year, but because we have to do some adjustments for FA2, we're only – for Focus Area Two – we're only going to do ... We're going to start those reviews in January.

So, we're giving a lot of lead time before we actually call you and we start doing these virtual events. We also don't have any planned unannounced reviews. Usually during the season, we plan a number of unannounced reviews for all grantees, but we're not planning any this year. That doesn't mean we'll never have an unannounced review because if the situation warrants itself that we absolutely need to come to a program because they're having some troubles, we may do an announced review. But, for all of the programs who are originally scheduled this year, we are not planning any unannounced reviews.

So, another thing is that people always want to know: "When will I hear about my review?" So, your review, we're going to start sending out 45-day notifications. Some people have already gotten that 45-day notification. So, if you have a Focus Area One that's coming up in November, you already got your notification. But for all grantees, we will do like we normally do. We have a rolling letter that we will send, and we'll send those letters through HSE as correspondence, so that if perchance you're not on site at your program, you will still get your 45-day notice. It

will still actually come to you. Okay? So, with these, we'll also have an opportunity to share information about the comprehensive services that you were providing before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. So, we want to make sure that grantees know that these monitoring events – although lots of things in your program may have been interrupted or they may be different because of COVID-19 – the monitoring process is really about who you are all the time. And so, we know that a lot of the programs are stepping up, and they're doing a lot of different things to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. But we also want to know about your future plans. We want to know about what you have been doing for your community, and we want you to have an opportunity to really – I always say – brag about the things that you are excited about in your program. And we want to give you the opportunity, even now, even virtually.

So, for our Focus Area One reviews, we're going to start those reviews November the 2nd. As usual, this is a virtual five-day review, all right? So, we're going to use a lot of different technology this year. Before, we called people on the phone, we will continue to do that. Now, we're in a world where we're using a lot of Zoom calls, WebEx, and many things like that, and so we may have an opportunity to use some of those things, but most of our Focus Area One reviews will again be on your telephone. So, your staff can join from wherever they are. They can call in. We have called in numbers. There are opportunities. There's still going to be a review lead who will call you and talk you through your schedule and make sure that you and all of your staff know – that you all know when those calls are actually going to happen and that you're ready to sit on the phone and really talk about the foundation of your program because that's what FA1 is about. It's really about telling us your plans, what you're doing, what you plan to do and how you're going to set off to get the progress and meet the goals that you set at your Head Start program.

We're also going to give you an opportunity just to describe the quality of your services, so we want you to talk about your approach, how you ensure that your services are quality. You know, how do you work with the community? These discussions will be every day. So, you'll get to have daily discussions with the review lead and anybody who you want to bring into those discussions. The review lead will allow you to have that person to have a conversation. So, if you want to bring other managers, if you want to bring in teachers, if you want to bring in parents, there's opportunities for everyone in your program to really talk and have an opportunity to share what you're doing in your community. And you're going to collaborate with your assigned reviewer, as I said earlier, just to develop your schedule for the week and then determine who's going to participate and how you want to facilitate the discussion. So, the Focus Area One review is really an opportunity for you to really share everything that you want to about your program.

So, Focus Area Two this year is going to be very different than all the years that we've done Focus Area Two. So, Focus Areas Two is really ... It's going to be a virtual five-day review, similar to Focus Area One, but this time we're going to have a team. So, on a Focus Area One, you just have one reviewer who has reviewees, but on the Focus Area Two virtual review, you'll have an average team size, depending on your program size, of four people. These four people – we're

using four people for this team size because they want to have opportunity to dig deeper into your program services. So, where Focus Area One is about your foundation and your plan, Focus Area Two is really about “what are you doing?”

So, when the reviewers ... The reviewers will set up times that they can speak with your staff, your management team, your governing body, your Policy Council, and they'll work with the program leadership to set those times up. And these conversations will not only include just conversation and interviews, but there will be times when the Focus Area Two for that team to do things like virtual data tours, so if you use something like Child Plus, or PROMIS, or any of those systems, this is an opportunity for you to share your screen and share your data with those reviewers. They also will do document reviews, so documents that you have available with HSES and documents that we need in order to do a virtual review. So, sometimes we may ask for fiscal documents or we may ask for child-file documents. So, you'll have an opportunity – in every review, they'll give you a list of documents that they'll need, they'll tell you where you need to put those documents, or they'll tell you whether or not there'll be a virtual review of those documents.

So, as we get closer to the Focus Area Two timeframe, we'll start to have tools that will help all the grantees understand the things that you need to have ready to share during those reviews. We're also going to look at your ERSEA file reviews. So, we know that during COVID-19, your enrollment and your attendance may look very different, but we still want to take a look and see: How are you enrolling children? What type of programs are they in? Are they getting in-person services, virtual services, remote services? But we also want to know: How are children attending? How are you taking attendance for your children? You know, attendance may look very different in your program right now, but we want to understand how that actually looks. So, Focus Area Two ... As we get closer to the January timeframe, you'll start to see that we'll start to give out more tools and more information to really help lead you through Focus Area Two preparation so you know the types of things that you need in your program. So, Ann, do you want to talk about some of the protocol.

Ann: Sure, and I want to step back for a minute and just also mentioned the IM I think that was issued Monday, and it's on ECLKC, about this upcoming season, which sort of summarizes what you're talking about. But I also want to give a credit to The Office of Head Start and Adia, in particular.

I think the approach that you're hearing today is, you know, again driven by the principles that I think reflected all the decisions we have made to support grantee success during, you know, these COVID times, really wanting programs to feel comfortable in taking advantage of and incorporating the flexibilities that we have issued as needed in your program. And I would say, you know, as supportive as we have been, it's always a little bit nerve-wracking, you know, when you have a – when you know an upcoming monitoring is coming, and even particularly in these times. And I would encourage programs ... We have published – the Office of Head Start – through the CAMP sessions, which Adia facilitated with her marshmallows. We have created so much information that I think it would be helpful for your management teams to review that

information, so you really have a level of confidence knowing what flexibilities are still available for you around programming. That said, you have the protocol highlights that are posted here ... It's always important ... You know, we want you to boast. We want you to share. But I think a lot of people ... I think legislators, I think the administration ... People are so interested in how grantees, particularly Head Start Grantees, what they're doing, what their strengths and creativity and approaches are, again, particularly during this time. This is going to be a great opportunity, because as you know we do several hundreds of reviews, to really find out how the CARES Act funding is being used. And it can be used in a variety of ways. There was a lot of discretion there, but for us to be able to understand how it was helpful to you, but also understanding on an aggregate level how programs in general use it and in what ways they needed to use that money to obviously provide safety – the best safety and safe environments – or adding staff. So, we are very curious, and this will be another opportunity for us to gather that kind of information. And again, always, we are always looking for programs to describe, you know, how their program determines child and family outcomes. And Adia mentioned earlier that there will be, you know, the review, as there always is, on the ERSEA strategies. And again, it's just to reiterate what Adia said, even more important this year to understand how you've managed that approach. If we could go onto the next one.

Adia: All right.

Ann: So, again, I don't think we see much new here. The report structure will still continue to have, again, the highlights, the summary, the OCIs, the AOCs, the ANCs, then of course our deficiencies. So, Adia, I think there's really no dramatic change in their report structure. Is that correct?

Adia: No, no dramatic changes at all. People should see this, a very similar report that they've been getting.

Ann: And then I think, lastly, again, I think we use this word a lot these days: unprecedented times. And again, we are sensitive to you operating during the COVID-19 crisis. We know things are probably going to look different. They're going to look different from program to program, maybe even within the same. We have some grantees that have large service areas. It could look very differently from one community to another community that you serve. You know, again, learning about the ways you're supporting children and families, be it virtual, be it hybrid, be it in-person. And again, engaging, very interested in understanding, you know, engaging your boards and Policy Council, and community stakeholders. We know that for programs that we have been able to interview and have some discussions with that the communication with parents, and Policy Council, and boards, because we know you're making rapid decisions and things are evolving. And again, wanting to understand whether it was COVID or not, but strengthened barriers and creative solutions.

We all talk about, you know, this has been something that we didn't anticipate, but we know from disasters that we always learned a lot, and we think that what programs have experienced and what they have learned are things that we need to carry forth. And, for some of you, we're gonna – we're gonna – you're probably gonna say, “You know what? During this pandemic, we

realized that we were doing something that wasn't necessary, and we found a better way to do it." So, I think those creative solutions that are going to transcend, when this terrible virus leaves us, are something that we want to capture. So, I think that monitoring, while it always gives us an opportunity to get a pulse on how many, many programs across the country are doing, I think the rich information and understanding that we're going to be able to call from these FA1s and FA2s is going to be significant.

Adia: All right. Thanks, Ann. So, hopefully ... I see in the chat box that people were saying that they can't hear me. So, I'm trying ... I'm talking directly into the phone now, so somebody in a presenter chat can let me know. I think this should be better. So, in the meantime, I'm going to give you a few reminders.

So, the first reminder is that the protocols will be posted on ECLKC in October 2020, so the FA1 protocol ... that's when we're going to post it. I saw a lot of questions in the chat about whether the protocols are going to be different. You know, what's going to be different about the protocols? This year, we're going to actually – the protocol itself is going to be the same because many of the questions in the protocol are relevant even during this time period. And so, remember earlier in my conversation, I talked about the fact that we want to know about your program in total. So, it's not just ... It's not only what's happening because of COVID-19.

We want to know about how your program operates all the time and how will your program – how you plan to operate in the future. And so, therefore, the protocol questions that we have in the current protocol: They apply. However, we are creating an addendum to the protocol that we'll share with you some key considerations, some things that you may want to add to the conversation because of COVID-19. So, a good example of that, you know, most programs received CARES funding.

And so, as part of the addendum that we provide to the grantees, we will ask you to consider how you spent your CARES funding. Did you spend it on PPE? Did you use it for sanitizing the facilities? We're also going to ask you questions about, you know, your services. So, remote services weren't something that we generally – that we offered pre-COVID-19. So, the reviewers will ask you questions about: How do you do that now? How are you actually providing comprehensive services through your virtual experiences or through your remote experiences? So, these are questions – they're very similar to the questions that we may have asked you prior to COVID-19, but they have a little spin on them because there are some things about your operations that just might look very different today. So, all the protocols will be posted. Yeah, go ahead, Ann.

Ann: Adia, can you talk a little bit about, you know, for a program that has two grants that are kind of – they have two FA1 reviews, or what about the whole issue of aligning reviews and grants across an agency's multiple grants?

Adia: Yeah, sure. You know, I saw that in the chat box. So, I'm going to actually – we're going to dive into all of those questions in the chat box in a second, Ann. So, don't worry. We'll get to them. I just want to let people know that the Focus Area Two protocol is going to be available in

December of 2020. And also, we always launch a virtual expo for you guys. So, the virtual expo will have the protocols, it'll have information, and there'll be more information coming about the things we'll be able to offer you through that. So now, Ann, let's jump into the questions that are inside of our chat box. So, I saw that question about people who have multiple grants, and so for grantees who have multiple grants, we're going to do the same thing that we've always done. For grantees who have multiple grants, we combine your reviews, so we try to make sure that all of your grants come together so that if we're doing a Focus Area One review, we're going to do it for all your grants. We're doing a Focus Area Two review, we're going to do it for all your grants. So, we try not to stagger your reviews because we don't want grantees to have multiple reviews across a number of years. So, we pick a year that seems like it's reasonable for the grantees, and then we do that review for all the grants at the same time.

Ann: So, Adia, what about ... So, kind of two questions in one: Someone noticed 45-days notice ... That was what's different than last year, wasn't it? And so did we switch up, both 45-day notices – these FA1 and FA2 – and is that the first time we'll know as a grantee with that notification letter that we're having either an FA1 or an FA2.

Adia: Right. So, the notification letters tell you whether or not you're having an FA1 and an FA2. However, there's a global letter that generally goes out to all grantees to let you know what type of review you're having in a given program year. And that comes out long before the 45-day letter. So, you get a global letter, and it tells you you're getting an FA1 or you getting an FA2 review this year, and it also gives you the grant that you're getting. The 45-day letter is a letter that tells you the date of your review. So, the 45 day-letter tells you the date of your review, and it tells you exactly when you're getting the review, and it also tells you the type of review that you're getting. And so, for people who notice, we did – we had more lead time on the – than the 45-day later. I think it was a 60-day letter last year, but with COVID-19, our time was compressed. And so, we actually had to shorten it to a 45-day letter. Hopefully, after COVID-19 is over, we'll be able to expand it back to 60 days, but for right now, the date – the date of your review will be sent 45 days in advance. But you will know the type of review that you're having. You should know that early on.

Ann: So, Adia, what's the likelihood that I might have the same reviewer for my FA2 that I had for my FA1?

Adia: Sometimes that happens. It's not planned. We have a lot of programs and a limited number of review leads, so we have to rotate those review leads around some many programs to do Focus Area Ones and Focus Area Twos. So, we can't guarantee that you'll have the same reviewer that you had for Focus Area One for Focus Area Two, but sometimes it does happen. But it's not – it's not a planned structure.

Ann: Okay. And someone asked ... I know if they go on ECLKC and just look under IMs, they'll find it – but the number for the IM, and it's just caps HS-20-05 FY2021 Monitoring Process for Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees, but you don't even need that all. If you just did HS-20-05, it will come up easily. It's probably the last IM we posted because I think that came out on Friday. Someone did ask a question, and this is certainly a good question. They have ...

They're up for a recompetition, and what about a follow-up reviews if they have findings that have not been followed up yet? So, will they have a follow-up?

Adia: Yes. So, the other thing that still tries to follow up on all the findings that we have. So, even if you're a grantee who knows that you're in competition, we generally do a follow-up review, but the best place to check about that is with your Regional Office. So, if you're unsure as to whether or not you're going to have a follow-up review or if you have enough time left to have a follow up review, I would suggest that you contact your program specialist at the Regional Office to see when they plan on doing the follow-up review for your grants.

Ann: Thank you. Let's see, let me just go through, Adia, and let's see if there are any ... Information is just so good that there aren't many questions.

Adia: Yeah, I noticed that like, you know, it was pretty straightforward today. I looked in the boxes. There weren't a lot of questions. I think everybody may be in shock. They, like you said, they might still be doing happy dances over there, Ann.

Ann: Yeah, and someone did ask a further question about, you know: If we have a follow-up review and our deficiencies or are uncorrected, will we lose our grant funding for the remainder of the fiscal year quickly? Clearly, we have a process to follow. If we did a follow-up review, and we found – we made a determination that the grant – that the deficiencies weren't corrected, then that would lead to termination. So, and termination has its – has its own process, and if your grant was ... Let's say your grant was expiring anyway on June 30th, if we would have to make a decision whether or not to work with the program. In some cases, we just allow the grant, instead of terminating, just to allow it to finish out the last couple of months of the grant period. But again, we would want you to talk to your Regional Office about that, and clearly, any of those decisions can't even be discussed until the review is actually done and the findings have been determined by the Office of Head Start. But I think the other questions – I think you've answered all of them.

Adia: Yeah, I think I did. There was a – there was a few more in the chat box, and I'm getting some help from a bunch of people, and maybe making some people very nervous. But there was a question about Zoom. Some people were asking will we conduct some of our visits through Zoom, and if the grantee has that ability. So, if you have Zoom or you have WebEx, and you'd like to – you'd like to do your Focus Area One that way that, then we can. And for Focus Area Two, we're going to work with grantees and see what types of virtual things that they have and how they're actually – how we actually can, you know, spend time with you. And it's a lot better to do face-to-face things, and you can show things in your program. But hopefully grantees, you know, grantees have been doing this for a while – we have a way to actually work with grantees.

Ann: And I don't ... This may be a repeat question. I'm sorry if I wasn't listening. Someone asked about the guidebooks for the protocols.



Adia: Yeah, this might – that might be a repeat. I saw that one. This was about the protocol, and I did answer that question, but I will again. Just note that they'll be posted in October and in December. So, it looks like somebody has given me a correction in the chat box, Ann. I want to make sure – there's 3,000 people on here – so I want to make sure that I make that correction. So, my team in the background ... We have people that help us out. And so, we normally send out a global letter to grantees, but in FY2020, it looks like we are not sending out the global letter. It looks like we're only sending out the 45-day letter. So, I'm going to go back, and I'm going to talk with my team a little bit about that. They hadn't had plans to send out the global letter, but I do want grantees to at least know which type of review they're getting this year. And that's been a common thing that the Office of Head Start has done. So, we're going to make sure that all grantees ... It may – you may not get a global letter, but we're going to make sure that you know the type of review that you're – that we're planning to provide to you this year, if you don't already know. I think that's a fair thing to do, and I think that grantee should get that type of advance notice.

So, my team is letting me know that they're not sending out global letters, that you're only going to get the 45-day letter, but I'm going to make sure that all grantees know the type of review that you're going to get well before that 45-day letter comes out. Okay? I just want to make that promise to the grantees, and I want to also make sure that I'm not saying something on this call and folks are looking for a global letter that's not coming.

Ann: Okay. I think you've captured it all, Adia.

Adia: All right. Well, it's always fun presenting with you, Ann. Now all – to all the grantees, I'm waving goodbye. You guys want to wave goodbye back? Alright, I see you. Have a great rest of your day, and if you have any further questions, you can always write into the Office of Head Start, you can write to DLH, Danya International, and we are happy to answer any questions that you have about monitoring in FY2021. Have a great day. Thanks, Ann.

Ann: Thank you. Thank you, Adia. Have a great year, folks.