

Sec. 645 Participation in Head Start Programs

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Sec. 645. [42 U.S.C. 9840]

(a)(1)(A) The Secretary shall by regulation prescribe eligibility for the participation of persons in Head Start programs assisted under this subchapter.

(B) Except as provided in paragraph (2), such regulation shall provide--

(i) that children from low-income families shall be eligible for participation in programs assisted under this subchapter if their families' incomes are below the poverty line, or if their families are eligible or, in the absence of child care, would potentially be eligible for public assistance; and

(ii) that homeless children shall be deemed to be eligible for such participation;

(iii) that programs assisted under this subchapter may include--

(I) to a reasonable extent (but not to exceed 10 percent of participants), participation of children in the area served who would benefit from such programs but who are not eligible under clause (i) or (ii); and

(II) from the area served, an additional 35 percent of participants who are not eligible under clause (i) or (ii) and whose families have incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line, if—

(aa) the Head Start agency involved establishes and implements outreach and enrollment policies and procedures that ensure such agency is meeting the needs of children eligible under clause (i) or (ii) (or subclause (I) if the child involved has a disability) prior to meeting the needs of children eligible under this subclause; and

(bb) in prioritizing the selection of children to be served, the Head Start agency establishes criteria that provide that the agency will serve children eligible under clause (i) or (ii) prior to serving the children eligible under this subclause;

(iv) that any Head Start agency serving children eligible under clause (iii)(II) shall report annually to the Secretary information on--

(I) how such agency is meeting the needs of children eligible under clause (i) or (ii), in the area served, including local demographic data on families of children eligible under clause (i) or (ii);

(II) the outreach and enrollment policies and procedures established by the agency that

ensure the agency is meeting the needs of children eligible under clause (i) or (ii) (or clause (iii)(I) if the child involved has a disability) prior to meeting the needs of children eligible under clause (iii)(II);

(III) the efforts, including outreach efforts (that are appropriate to the community involved), of such agency to be fully enrolled with children eligible under clause (i) or (ii);

(IV) the policies, procedures, and selection criteria such agency is implementing to serve eligible children, consistent with clause (iii)(II);

(V) the agency's enrollment level, and enrollment level over the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the report is submitted;

(VI) the number of children served by the agency, disaggregated by whether such children are eligible under clause (i), clause (ii), clause (iii)(I), or clause (iii)(II); and

(VII) the eligibility criteria category of the children on the agency's waiting list;

(v) that a child who has been determined to meet the eligibility criteria described in this subparagraph and who is participating in a Head Start program in a program year shall be considered to continue to meet the eligibility criteria through the end of the succeeding program year.

(C) In determining, for purposes of this paragraph, whether a child who has applied for enrollment in a Head Start program meets the eligibility criteria, an entity may consider evidence of family income during the 12 months preceding the month in which the application is submitted, or during the calendar year preceding the calendar year in which the application is submitted, whichever more accurately reflects the needs of the family at the time of application.

(2) Whenever a Head Start program is operated in a community with a population of 1,000 or less individuals and--

(A) there is no other preschool program in the community;

(B) the community is located in a medically underserved area, as designated by the Secretary pursuant to section 330(b)(3) of the Public Health Service Act [42 U.S.C. §254c(b)(3)] and is located in a health professional shortage area, as designated by the Secretary pursuant to section 332(a)(1) of such Act [42 U.S.C. §254e(a)(1)];

(C) the community is in a location which, by reason of remoteness, does not permit reasonable access to the types of services described in clauses (A) and (B); and

(D) not less than 50 percent of the families to be served in the community are eligible under the eligibility criteria established by the Secretary under paragraph (1); the Head Start program in such locality shall establish the criteria for eligibility, except that no child residing in such community whose family is eligible under such eligibility criteria shall, by virtue of such project's eligibility criteria, be denied an opportunity to participate in such program. During the period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Human Services Reauthorization Act and ending on October 1, 1994, and unless specifically authorized in any statute of the United States enacted after such date of enactment, the Secretary may not make any change in the method, as in effect on April 25, 1984, of calculating income used to prescribe eligibility for the

participation of persons in the Head Start programs assisted under this subchapter if such change would result in any reduction in, or exclusion from, participation of persons in any of such programs.

(3)(A) In this paragraph:

(i) The term 'dependent' has the meaning given the term in paragraphs (2)(A) and (4)(A)(i) of section 401(a) of title 37, United States Code.

(ii) The terms 'member' and 'uniformed services' have the meanings given the terms in paragraphs (23) and (3), respectively, of section 101 of title 37, United States Code.

(B) The following amounts of pay and allowance of a member of the uniformed services shall not be considered to be income for purposes of determining the eligibility of a dependent of such member for programs funded under this subchapter:

(i) The amount of any special pay payable under section 310 of title 37, United States Code, relating to duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger.

(ii) The amount of basic allowance payable under section 403 of such title, including any such amount that is provided on behalf of the member for housing that is acquired or constructed under the alternative authority for the acquisition and improvement of military housing under subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10, United States Code, or any other related provision of law.

(4) After demonstrating a need through a communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment, a Head Start agency may apply to the Secretary to convert part-day sessions, particularly consecutive part-day sessions, into full-working-day sessions.

(5)(A) Upon written request and pursuant to the requirements of this paragraph, a Head Start agency may use funds that were awarded under this subchapter to serve children age 3 to compulsory school age, in order to serve infants and toddlers if the agency submits an application to the Secretary containing, as specified in rules issued by the Secretary, all of the following information:

(i) The amount of such funds that are proposed to be used in accordance with section [645A\(b\)](#).

(ii) A communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment demonstrating how the use of such funds would best meet the needs of the community.

(iii) A description of how the needs of pregnant women, and of infants and toddlers, will be addressed in accordance with section [645A\(b\)](#), and with regulations prescribed by the Secretary pursuant to section [641A](#) in areas including the agency's approach to child development and provision of health services, approach to family and community partnerships, and approach to program design and management.

(iv) A description of how the needs of eligible children will be met in the community.

(v) Assurances that the agency will participate in technical assistance activities (including planning, start-up site visits, and national training activities) in the same manner as recipients of grants under section [645A](#).

(vi) Evidence that the agency meets the same eligibility criteria as recipients of grants under section [645A](#).

(B) An application that satisfies the requirements specified in subparagraph (A) shall be approved by the Secretary unless the Secretary finds that--

(i) the agency lacks adequate capacity and capability to carry out an effective Early Head Start program; or

(ii) the information provided under subparagraph (A) is inadequate.

(C) In approving such applications, the Secretary shall take into account the costs of serving persons under section [645A](#).

(D) Any Head Start agency with an application approved under subparagraph (B) shall be considered to be an Early Head Start agency and shall be subject to the same rules, regulations, and conditions as apply to recipients of grants under section [645A](#), with respect to activities carried out under this paragraph.

(b) The Secretary shall not prescribe any fee schedule or otherwise provide for the charging of any fees for participation in Head Start programs, unless such fees are authorized by legislation hereafter enacted. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the families of children who participate in Head Start programs and who are willing and able to pay the full cost of such participation from doing so. A Head Start agency that provides a Head Start program with full-working-day services in collaboration with other agencies or entities may collect a family copayment to support extended day services if a copayment is required in conjunction with the collaborative. The copayment charged to families receiving services through the Head Start program shall not exceed the copayment charged to families with similar incomes and circumstances who are receiving the services through participation in a program carried out by another agency or entity.

(c) Each Head Start program operated in a community shall be permitted to provide more than 1 year of Head Start services to eligible children in the State. Each Head Start program operated in a community shall be permitted to recruit and accept applications for enrollment of children throughout the year.

(d)(1) An Indian tribe that--

(A) operates a Head Start program;

(B) enrolls as participants in the program all children in the community served by the tribe (including a community that is an off-reservation area, designated by an appropriate tribal government, in consultation with the Secretary) from families that meet the low-income criteria prescribed under subsection (a)(1)(A); and

(C) has the resources to enroll additional children in the community who do not meet the low-income criteria; may enroll such additional children in a Head Start program, in accordance with this subsection, if the program predominantly serves children who meet the low-income criteria.

(2) The Indian tribe shall enroll the children in the Head Start program in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary may specify by regulation promulgated after consultation with Indian tribes.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, an Indian tribe or tribes that operates both an

Early Head Start program under section [645A](#) and a Head Start program may, at its discretion, at any time during the grant period involved, reallocate funds between the Early Head Start program and the Head Start program in order to address fluctuations in client populations, including pregnant women and children from birth to compulsory school age. The reallocation of such funds between programs by an Indian tribe or tribes during a year shall not serve as the basis for the Secretary to reduce a base grant (as defined in section [640\(a\)\(7\)](#)) for either program in succeeding years.