



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Head Start | 4th Floor – Switzer Memorial Building, 330 C Street SW, Washington DC 20024 eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

Program Performance Summary Report

To: Authorizing Official/Board Chairperson

Mr. Brad LeMaster
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From: Responsible HHS Official

Date: 03/02/2021

**On behalf of Dr. Bernadine Futrell
Director, Office of Head Start**

From January 25, 2021 to January 29, 2021, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review of the Gateway Community Services Organization, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This report contains information about the grantee's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or Public Law 110-134, *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your governing body, policy council, parents, and staff for their engagement in the review process. Based on the information gathered during this review, we have found your program meets the requirements of all applicable HSPPS, laws, regulations, and policy requirements.

Please contact your Regional Office for guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Your Regional Office will follow up on the content of this report and can work with you to identify resources to support your program's continuous improvement.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT

Copies of this report will be distributed to the following recipients:

Ms. Heather Wanderski, Acting Regional Program Manager
Mrs. Charlene Engle, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
Mrs. Martina Roe, Head Start Director
Mrs. Martina Roe, Early Head Start Director

Glossary of Terms

Opportunity for Continuous Improvement (OCI)	<p>An OCI is identified when the grantee is determined compliant in an area; however, through intentional, continuous improvement strategies, the agency has the opportunity to enhance overall program quality.</p>
Area of Noncompliance (ANC)	<p>An ANC is identified when the grantee is out of compliance with a specific federal requirement. The grantee is given a specified corrective action timeline wherein the ANC must be fully corrected. If not corrected within the specified timeline, the uncorrected ANC becomes a deficiency.</p>
Deficiency	<p>As defined in the Head Start Act, the term "deficiency" means:</p> <p>(A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff; (ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations; (iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management; (iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter; (v) loss of legal status (as determined by the Secretary) or financial viability, loss of permits, debarment from receiving Federal grants or contracts, or the improper use of Federal funds; or (vi) failure to meet any other Federal or State requirement that the agency has shown an unwillingness or inability to correct, after notice from the Secretary, within the period specified; <p>(B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or</p> <p>(C) an unresolved area of noncompliance.</p>



Program Management and Quality Improvement

Program Management

The grantee establishes a management structure consisting of staff, consultants, or contractors who ensure high-quality service delivery; have sufficient knowledge, training, experience, and competencies to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions; and provide regular supervision and support to staff.

Ongoing Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

The grantee uses data to identify program strengths, needs, and areas needing improvement; evaluate progress toward achieving program goals and compliance with program performance standards; and assess the effectiveness of professional development.

Program Governance

The policy council is engaged in the direction of the program, including program design and planning of goals and objectives.

The grantee maintains a formal structure of program governance to oversee the quality of services for children and families and to make decisions related to program design and implementation.

Program Management and Quality Improvement Summary

Gateway Community Services Organization, Inc.'s management and governance structures supported high-quality service delivery. The program assigned a manager to oversee operations and staff in each program area and emphasized additional training to further strengthen the skills of their already experienced management team. Training and credentialing included Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) certification for all managers and the Family Advocate Certificate for the parent, family, and community engagement manager. In addition, managers obtained a Data Literacy Credential to enhance their understanding and use of data and were cross-trained to better understand the other service areas. Additional program oversight was provided by the governing board and the policy council, which were both comprised of parents and community representatives from the private and public sectors. The governing bodies received annual and ongoing training on federal regulations and topics specific to program management. The governing bodies also received informational reports before each meeting to aid in informed decision-making. The management team and governing bodies provided informed supervision and oversight of program operations, resulting in the delivery of quality Head Start and Early Head Start services.

Gateway Community Services Organization, Inc.'s use of data and willingness to be flexible resulted in services responsive to families' needs. The management team and program staff regularly collected and analyzed ChildPlus reports and data from classroom observations, staff surveys, self-assessments, and other sources. This data was analyzed to establish program goals, to measure progress towards meeting those goals, and to drive quality improvement. For example, when program data indicated low enrollment numbers in some counties within the program's service area, the management team and governing bodies discussed possible causes and solutions. These data discussions led the program to move slots to areas with more significant needs, which helped the program to reach full enrollment and allowed eligible families to benefit from services. Data analysis also prompted the program to purchase a new bus when it determined the purchase was less expensive than continuing the costly repairs on the old bus. The program realized it needed a way to cut down on travel time and expense while still providing oversight to classrooms. In response, the program created additional ChildPlus modules to house lesson plans for remote monitoring and installed security cameras in approximately half of the classrooms. These cameras facilitated virtual classroom, CLASS, and mental health observations and reduced the travel time across the program's vast service area. The information gathered from this virtual data collection allowed for quick implementation of Google Classroom and Google Meet platforms to continue services and governing bodies' meetings during COVID-19. The use of data to establish program goals and to track progress led to responsive improvements in services.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Education and Child Development Services

Alignment with School Readiness

The grantee's school readiness efforts align with the expectations of receiving schools, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and State early learning standards.

Effective and Intentional Teaching Practices

The grantee's teaching practices intentionally promote progress toward school readiness and provide high-quality learning experiences for children.

Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness

The grantee prepares teachers to implement the curriculum and support children's progress toward school readiness.

Home-based Program Services

Not Applicable.

Monitoring and Implementing Quality Education and Child Development Services Summary

Gateway Community Services Organization, Inc. established school readiness goals, supported teachers' intentional teaching practices, and implemented successful transition strategies to promote school readiness. Program staff, the governing board, and the policy council reviewed data and developed school readiness goals aligned with receiving schools' expectations, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and the Kentucky Early Learning Standards. The program ensured quality teaching practices and effective curricula implementation through coaching, classroom observations, strength-based feedback, and professional development. Teachers received coaching through a two-tiered approach, which assigned staff to either the Practice-Based Coaching model or a peer-based coaching system. Program data indicated the program's intentional teaching strategies and teacher support yielded positive results for children. For example, training and support focusing on children's literacy resulted in a 35 percent increase in literacy proficiency. The program also fostered collaborations with the local education agencies (LEAs) to strengthen services and enhance children's school readiness. LEA and program staff discussed school expectations, kindergarten entry assessment data, and supportive transition activities for children and families. The contracted mental health professionals and the disabilities/mental health manager provided additional school readiness support for children and families, which was especially helpful for children with disabilities or social-emotional concerns. During COVID-19, school readiness services became virtual. The program implemented Google Meet and Google Classroom virtual platforms and provided families with electronic tablets, educational software, educational supplies, and individualized learning activities to use at home. Staff stayed connected with families through email, Google Meet, texts, phone calls, and ChildPlus modules distributed to families. The program's educational services helped children to prepare for kindergarten before and during COVID-19.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Health Services

Child Health Status and Care

The grantee effectively monitors and maintains timely information on children's health status and care including ongoing sources of health care, preventive care, and follow-up.

Mental Health

The grantee supports a program-wide culture that promotes mental health and social and emotional well-being, and uses mental health consultation to support staff.

Oral Health and Nutrition

The grantee maintains and monitors for effective oral health practices and nutrition services that meet the nutritional needs and accommodate feeding requirements and allergies.

Safety Practices

The grantee implements a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments.

Services to Pregnant Women

Not Applicable.

Monitoring and Implementing Quality Health Services Summary

Gateway Community Services Organization, Inc. provided health services to support children's growth and school readiness. Health-related documentation was obtained at the time of application, and at orientation sessions, parents provided any additional documentation required. Program staff entered all health information and related documents into ChildPlus, where staff could track due dates to support children and families in obtaining follow-up. Using its program-developed resource guide, staff referred children and families with health needs to community agencies. The management team reviewed ChildPlus health data, mental health classroom observation notes, health and safety monitoring tools, and parent and staff surveys during monthly meetings. These data reviews helped the program to identify health-related trends and to establish plans to address them. The effectiveness of this approach was evident in the program's response to data showing high rates of overweight children. The program addressed this concern by offering nutritional counseling to families, which resulted in a decreased body mass index for 88 percent of enrolled children. The program addressed mental health needs by contracting with two mental health consultants to support children, families, and staff. The mental health consultants completed classroom observations, trained staff and families, and referred children for follow-up services. The program's process for obtaining and tracking health data helped to identify children's needs and supported the delivery of timely services to support their health and well-being.

The program ensured learning environments were safe for children, families, and staff. Staff received annual health and safety training, including active supervision strategies. Program staff performed indoor and outdoor monitoring, and results were tracked in ChildPlus to ensure timely repairs. The program provided health-related information in parent packets and monthly parent meetings, including virtual meetings during COVID-19. For the safety of children and staff participating in in-person service during COVID-19, the program purchased wand sanitizers and enhanced classroom cleaning practices. Safety practices implemented by the program kept all participants safe.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services

Family Well-being

The grantee collaborates with families to support family well-being, parents' aspirations, and parents' life goals.

Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports

The grantee provides services that strengthen parent-child relationships and support parents in strengthening parenting skills.

Family Engagement in Education and Child Development Services

The grantee provides education and child development services that recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators and encourage parents to engage in their child's education.

Monitoring and Implementing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services Summary

Gateway Community Services Organization, Inc. helped families set goals and strengthen parenting skills. Families and staff worked together to complete needs assessments, establish family goals, and identify helpful resources. The program tracked data on family needs and goals to identify trends and collaborated with the local schools and community agencies to address common issues. Family advocates attended quarterly regional interagency council meetings to strengthen collaborative relationships within the community and to plan additional services. In addition, the program implemented the Nurturing Parenting Program curriculum to help parents strengthen their parenting skills and to encourage parents in their role as the child's first teacher. All parents received the curriculum materials and had access to online resources. These learning activities included group discussions, videos, parent workbooks, guides, and take-home activities. Teachers also involved parents in their child's education with home visits, meetings about child outcomes, transition activities, and by sharing general child development information. During COVID-19, all parents had access to Google Meet and Google Classroom, allowing them to continue communication with staff and involvement with educational activities. The program's support and resources fostered well-being and long-term positive outcomes for families.



Monitoring and Implementing Fiscal Infrastructure

Budget Planning and Development

The grantee develops and implements its budget to sustain management, staffing structures, and the delivery of services that support the needs of enrolled children and families.

Ongoing Fiscal Capacity

The grantee plans and implements a fiscal management system that supports the organization's ongoing capacity to execute its budget over time and meet the needs of its organization.

Budget Execution

The grantee's financial management system provides for effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and other assets.

Facilities and Equipment

The grantee complies with application, prior approval, and reporting requirements for facilities purchased, constructed, or renovated with Head Start funds.

Monitoring and Implementing Fiscal Infrastructure Summary

Gateway Community Services Organization, Inc. had a structure and system in place for adequate financial control and budget management. The grantee's experienced financial staff utilized internal controls, procedures, and financial assessment capabilities to manage program funds. The grantee implemented a new general ledger and grants management system, Sage Intacct, in late 2020. This system allowed more real-time budget and expense data to be shared with the management team and maintained strong internal controls. The management team and fiscal department collaborated to develop a budget responsive to program goals with oversight from the policy council and the governing board. The occurrence of COVID-19 influenced management to utilize Coronavirus, Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding to purchase HATCH electronic tablets for all 4-year-old students, allowing them to remain connected through the learning platform. Gateway Community Services Organization, Inc. continued sound financial practices seamlessly despite inopportune virtual conditions in 2020 and 2021.



Monitoring ERSEA: Eligibility, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

Determining, Verifying, and Documenting Eligibility

At least 10 percent of the grantee's total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA or the grantee has received a waiver.

The grantee enrolls children or pregnant women who are categorically eligible or who meet defined income-eligibility requirements.

Enrollment Verification

The grantee maintains and tracks enrollment for all participants including pregnant women.

Monitoring ERSEA: Eligibility, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance Summary

Gateway Community Services Organization, Inc. implemented ERSEA practices to enroll children and families with the greatest need. Staff and governing body members received training on ERSEA requirements and worked with staff to review community assessment data to determine high-risk groups in the service area. The community assessment identified the prevalence of issues such as incarceration, teen parenting, child neglect, and substance abuse in the area. These issues were incorporated into the program's selection criteria to ensure families experiencing these risk factors were prioritized. Intake completed by family advocates, oversight by the ERSEA manager, and the use of ChildPlus to manage all enrollment information helped the program to verify the accuracy of family eligibility and to ensure services were offered to families with the highest needs. In response to COVID-19, the program transitioned in-person ERSEA interviews to phone calls and documentation collection to electronic submission of photos, emails, or scans. The program's ERSEA practices and protocols ensured the accurate tracking and full enrollment of families with the highest need.

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