



Hidalgo County Head Start Program

Policy Council Agenda

DATE: November 19, 2008

SUBJECT: Discussion/Approval of the Administrative Plan

RATIONALE/NEED: The Administrative Program plan must be approved annually to comply with Federal Performance Standards.

RECOMMENDATION: Administration recommends approval.

COST: N/A

RELATED INFORMATION INCLUDES: Administrative Plan

INITIATED BY: Nora S. Munoz, Assistant Program Director 

REVIEWED BY: Edmundo Garcia, Assistant Program Director 

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL: 

Hidalgo County Head Start Program

Administrative Plan



2008-2009

Hidalgo County Head Start Administrative Program Plan

Introduction

The Hidalgo County Head Start Administrative Plan defines the administrative procedures that correspond to the implementation of the requirements of processes, philosophy, regulations, policies and recommendations included in **45 CFR Chapter XIII Office of Human Development Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Subchapter B The Administration of Children, Youth and Families, Head Start Program, Parts 1301 through 1311, Part 92 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Title 2 CFR Part 225 Cost Principles for Non-Profits Organization** (formerly referred to as OMB A-87) and **OMB Circular A-102 Grants Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments and Circular A-133 Audits of State, Local Governments, and Non-Profits Organizations.**

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has developed and implemented a systematic, ongoing process of program planning that includes consultation with the program's governing body, policy groups, program staff and community organizations that serve Head Start and other low-income families with young children, as mandated by the **Head Start Act Title I Service Amendments of 1994 646(2)(4) and (b) and Part 1303 and Subpart D Program Design and Management 1304.51 Management Systems and Procedures.**

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program is center based, whereby children attend a classroom type setting. This is offered to all three and four year old children who meet the Head Start requirements on a first come, first serve basis. The home based services, where the home educator provides comprehensive Head Start services at the home, is also an option that can be utilized under extenuating circumstances and with authorization from the Office of Head Start regional office of the Health and Human Services Department.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program's desired outcomes include increased opportunities for children to succeed and to promote the development of the total child, family and community involvement through advocacy, training and technical assistance. The Hidalgo County Head Start Program emphasizes the employment of staff from the service area. Currently **46%** of the Hidalgo County Head Start Program staff is composed of current or former Head Start parents. Furthermore, Head Start joins hands with the community in making it possible for these children and their families to engage in developmentally appropriate practices for early childhood development designed to encourage and achieve a greater degree of social competence.

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The Hidalgo County Head Start Program demands not only innovative and broad perspectives but also skills in problem solving in varied and changing situations as well. The Head Start Program's design includes a systematic method for identifying needs for services as well as the periodic evaluation of existing services. Administration and staff are committed to bringing their abilities to respond to the ever changing needs of the diverse Rio Grande Valley communities of South Texas. With active outreach for this population of children and their parents, Head Start staff is committed to providing the training and education that fosters understanding of and involvement in the development of children. In all cases, it is the commitment of Head Start staff to enable parents to become involved in the development, implementation, and direction of local programs.

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45CFR1304.50 Program Design and Governance

The Hidalgo County Head Start Policy Council is structured to facilitate shared governance which allows parents to participate in policy making and in other decisions about the program. The governance structure is outlined in the official Program By-Laws with adequate procedures for electing parents and nominating community representatives.

The Policy Council is established at the grantee level, with Parent Committees, comprised exclusively of Head Start parents at the center level. The process and procedures to elect the parents at the center level as well as community and parent representatives to the Policy Council is addressed in the procedures outlined in the **Family Services Procedures Manual** as well as in **the Policy Council By-Laws**.

It is the intention of the selection process to prevent the Grantee Board and Policy Council from having identical memberships and functions.

According to the By-Laws, the Policy Council shall be comprised of two types of representatives: parents of currently enrolled children and community representatives, with 51 percent of the members being parents of currently enrolled children (1306.3(h)). Community representatives are drawn from the local community: businesses; public or private community, civic, and professional organizations; and others who are familiar with the needs, the resources and the services for low-income children and families. All members are limited, to a one year term and may serve the maximum of three (3) years, as specified in Head Start regulations and Policy Council By Laws.

The Policy Council works in partnership with key management staff and the governing body to develop, review and approve or disapprove policies and procedures for shared decision making, program planning in accordance with **45 CFR 1305.3**, program philosophy, defining criteria for recruitment and selection and enrollment priorities in accordance with **45 CFR Part 1305**.

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45 CFR Part 1304.51[(a)-(i).Management Systems and Procedures

Program Planning (Assessment, Long and Short Range)

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has a systematic, ongoing process of program planning that includes consultation with the program's governing body, policy groups and program staff, and with other community organizations that serve Head Start children or other low-income families with young children.

The service area for the Hidalgo County Head Start Program shall be the County of Hidalgo and all of the municipalities and rural areas within the County.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program conducts a comprehensive **Community Assessment (CA)** once every three years with yearly updates to determine the Program options best suited to the needs of the children and the families served and the capabilities and resources for the program staff. The **CA** is conducted in collaboration with the University of Texas at Pan American.

The Policy Council reviews the **CA** to ensure that as many Head Start eligible children are served within the recruitment areas. The areas served have been determined to be those which have the greatest need for the Head Start Services.

A long range multi-year Strategic Plan and short term Program Plans are formulated for all content areas utilizing the **CA** information in order to determine the scope of services most needed and to implement the appropriate program options.

Personnel from each content area develop a Program Plan during the months of April through June. The Program Plans are first presented to the advisory committees which are comprised of parents, staff, and professionals from the community. The Policy Council reviews the plans and any modifications and recommendations are incorporated into the plans. The final Program Plans are presented to the Advisory Committees for review and recommendations. Finalized Program Plans are then approved by the Policy Council and the Grantee Board. A full narrative of the Program Plans is submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services.

A semiannual review of Program options and Program Plans is conducted by all Department Directors. Revisions in the program options and plans that will cause a change in the intent of the funded program will be submitted to the Advisory Committees and Policy Council for their consideration. If approved, the action will go to the Grantee Board for its consideration and then forwarded to the Department of Health and Human Services for its review and approval.

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Program options are presented annually to the Policy Council and the Grantee Board for their review and approval during the month of June. Program options are based on an updated **CA**. Based on the **CA** information, the Policy Council will review and determine if there is a need to change the criteria for recruitment and selection of children.

The program options that were selected based on the **CA** are as follows:

*Center Based Services:	43 Centers, 192 Classrooms
*Actual Days of operation:	Monday- Friday 172 days
*Full Day Services:	7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The **Community Assessment** also includes the following information regarding the service area: other child development and child care programs; services and resources provided to children with disabilities; information regarding education, health, nutrition, social services available to Head Start children and families; demographic information regarding the service area; statistics by families and population; and community resources that address the needs of Head Start children and their families.

Communication System: General, Community, Staff and Governing Body and Policy Council

The Hidalgo County Head Start program maintains an ongoing communication system that ensures that timely and accurate information is provided to the parents, the policy council, the Grantee Board, the staff and the community in general.

An agenda is developed for every Policy Council meeting with input from staff and the chairperson of the Policy Council. The agenda is certified by the county clerk and posted for public viewing at the Administrative Offices of the County and at Head Start Administrative Offices. The agenda is then forwarded to the Grantee Board. All agenda items are presented to the Policy Council during the regularly scheduled meeting (3rd Wednesday of each month). Agenda items are then submitted to the Grantee Board for approval once a month.

All monthly Policy Council meetings are attended by representatives from the Grantee Board.

Agenda and minutes of Policy Council meetings are sent for posting to each center and also posted at the Head Start Administrative Office for public viewing. Copies of minutes are also sent to the Grantee Board after every Policy Council meeting.

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Monthly staff meetings at the administrative office and at each center and memorandums and staff development trainings are all utilized as a tool for internal communications with staff.

Monthly center committee meetings, parent workshops, parent conferences and parent progress reports, are used to communicate important issues to the Head Start parents.

Quarterly newsletters, memoranda and announcements placed with local churches and social agencies, classified advertisements in local area newspapers, public service announcements and advisory committee meetings are all instruments used to communicate with the community at large, staff and parents of Head Start children.

The Admission Review and Dismissal (ARD) meetings with a multi-disciplinary team and parents are held to discuss and develop the Individual Education Plan (IEP) in order to meet the needs of special children.

At least twice a year Staff Advisory Committee meetings are conducted in order to communicate overall program goals, objectives and activities related to program components instruction, family services, health services, special services, nutritional services, staff development, transportation and literacy services to advise in the areas of personnel and benefits and to increase communication and encourage the exchange of information. This committee is composed of fourteen (14) staff members plus the Executive Program Director, the two Assistant Directors and the Administrative Assistant in charge of Human Resources.

The hierarchal structure relative to supervisory and operational responsibilities of all program personnel is delineated in the Program's organizational chart. This structure also facilitates the flow of information up and down the organization. Every site has a supervisor in charge (Center Manager, Head Cook, Department Director/Head) who participates in monthly meetings with supervisors and is required to meet with subordinates to share information.

Any and all official communication from the Head Start Director to the Grantee Board or the Policy Council is in writing. If the communication is legal in nature or needs to be brought to the attention of the Policy Council, a copy is forwarded to the Policy Council Chairperson to be included as an agenda item for the Policy Council's regularly scheduled meeting.

All Policy Statements or directives received from Health and Human Services or other federal agencies that are relevant to the conduct of Head Start business are forwarded to the Head Start Director for distribution to staff, to Policy Council Members and to the Grantee Board.

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Provision for communications among Head Start parents and program staff, and community partners which outline plans for operational procedures and emergencies are reflected in the content area procedures manuals for **Family Services (1304.22(a)(4), .41(a)(1), .51(b))**.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has made great strides in implementing an integrated communication system via its computer network. The Program uses e-mail and an online messaging system to communicate with all departments and with the majority of the centers.

Record Keeping and Reporting System

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program conducts its operations in an effective and efficient manner, free of political bias or family favoritism. The Hidalgo County Head Start Program provides reasonable public access to information and to the Program's records.

The Program's record-keeping systems establish and maintain efficient and effective records that provide accurate and timely information regarding children, families, and staff and safeguard and ensure appropriate confidentiality of the information.

Currently the Hidalgo County Head Start Program has invested time and resources in installing computer systems that facilitate communication and record keeping.

The Program Resources and Outcomes Management Information System (PROMIS) is a computerized system capable of maintaining a complete family history and producing reports for monitoring program activities in order to meet federal deadlines in health, mental health, family services, special services and nutrition. This web-based system is networked to the majority of our centers and to all of the departments within the administration complex.

The Micro Information Processing (MIP) system generates periodic reports of financial status and program operations in order to control program quality, maintain program accountability, and advise governing bodies, policy groups, and staff of program progress. In addition, it generates official reports for Federal, State, and local authorities as required by applicable law. This system does contain a procurement module that produces electronic requisitions which maximize internal controls and safeguard expenditures. The Financial Accounting Manual contains detailed information on the utilization of this system.

The Learning Accomplishment Profile Diagnostic (LAP-D) program is another computerized system utilized in the classroom to assess and document the child's progress in mastering the domains of literacy, mathematics and language. It is a key tool in individualizing each child's instructional and documenting progress. The

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information is gathered in the classroom by utilizing hand-held devices which are then connected to a web-based system that in turn generates reports on each child's assessment. Additional detailed information regarding this system is found in the Early Education Development and Health Services Program Plans.

ABRA is a computerized system used for managing and monitoring all personnel records. This system is in the initial stages of becoming fully operational.

Each content area has developed a procedures manual to meet the documentation requirements of the Head Start Standards. Please refer to the procedures manuals of Early Childhood Development and Health, Family Services, Community Partnerships and the Program Administrative Plan as well as the Accounting, Procurement and Personnel Procedures Manuals.

Budget Development

The budget development process begins in April. Several sources of information are used to create a comprehensive process that responds to the needs of children and their families. These resources include the following:

- The Community Assessment
- Self Assessment
- Reviews by Executive team Members of their areas of responsibilities
- The Technical and Training Assistance Plan
- Staff development information needs collected from staff, appraisals, and children's outcomes
- Facilities inspections and reviews conducted by maintenance personnel
- The quest for increasing automation of information management and business systems
- Policy Council and Grantee Board concerns or direction to improve the quality of services
- Reviews of expenditure reports for the previous year
- Feedback documented from the center staff through the center managers and support services facilitators

The Executive Team reviews the budget. Each member then meets with the Executive Director, Assistant Program Directors and Finance Director for accuracy and applicability. A consolidated budget is then developed by the Executive Director, Assistant Program Directors and Finance Director for submission to the Budget Committee for their input and direction.

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After input from the Budget Committee, the Budget is submitted to the Policy Council for the first review. If no revisions are necessary, the budget is presented to the Grantee Board in September for their review and approval. If the Budget is revised by the Grantee Board, it is re-submitted to the Policy Council for revision. The Budget is officially submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services after the necessary approvals.

Budget Review and Revision

Budget reviews are conducted throughout the year with each Content Area Director and the Executive Director. After this review, budget modifications, if needed, are recommended to the Policy Council and the Grantee Board. After consideration by the Budget Committee a recommendation is made to the Policy Council and the Grantee Board. If approved, the budget revisions are sent to Health and Human Services for action.

Annual Self-Assessment

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program conducts a Self-Assessment utilizing the Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocol which is disseminated to ten (10) Self-Assessment Teams. The Self-Assessment Teams are composed of Policy Council members, Head Start staff, Grantee Board members and private consultants as needed.

The Head Start Executive Director and the two (2) Assistant Directors meet with the Self-Assessment Teams to provide training and guidance. Additional meetings are scheduled as necessary. Each member of the assessment team receives a packet of instructions, assessment tools, and report forms to be used when conducting the assessment. Each item in the packet is reviewed during the meeting. The following topics are discussed at the training meeting.

- The purpose of the Self-Assessment
- The responsibility of the Self-Assessment Team and of the individual team members
- The proper attitudes for team members toward staff and parents
- Assessment techniques: Interviewing, observing, examining records, what questions to ask, what methods to use, how to document assessment findings, when and where to submit findings

The Self-Assessment includes ten (10) teams of members composed of department staff, other staff as needed, parents, Policy Council Members and specialists. Self-Assessment includes the review of at least two (2) files per classroom for all one-hundred ninety-two (192) classrooms.

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Corrective action plans are developed, including all areas of concerns, findings and weaknesses for each center. The format for the Corrective Plan includes: areas of concern, performance standards, corrective action tasks, person responsible, timeline and validation.

The Executive Team Members take a leadership role in assisting each center assigned to them in implementing the Corrective Action Plans. Each Corrective Action Plan is then validated and confirmed by Executive Team Members who review Plans for centers not assigned to them for monitoring purposes.

Because of the confidentiality of children's and families' records required by Head Start Performance Standards, parents and volunteers are prohibited from reviewing records other than those of their own children. Children's health and educational records and social services records of families are open only to Head Start staff and Special Consultants on a need to know basis. Similarly, sensitive personnel information and other personal data must be respected as confidential and available strictly on a need to know basis.

Monitoring Process

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has established procedures for ongoing monitoring of Head Start operations that ensures the effective implementation of Federal regulations.

Since 2005, the Executive Team has been assigned to assist in the monitoring of program operations at each center. The Executive Team is composed of all department and area Directors, Coordinators, Program Specialists Assistant Program Directors and Executive Director.

The members of the team are each assigned one (1) or two (2) centers to visit for monitoring and to assist center staff in performing their duties and responsibilities. They are a scheduled to visit each center once a week and provide written feedback and assistance to center managers and support facilitators and other center staff.

Executive Team Members including Directors, Coordinators and Program Specialists are required to provide documented feedback (Center Observation Abbreviated Form) on areas of strength (commendations) and areas needing attention (recommendation) for each weekly visit. Weekly plans are prepared by teachers, center managers, support service facilitators, support service assistants and Executive Team members. These plans are reviewed by the respective supervisor to determine if work schedules and activities are in line with appropriate Program operations.

Four (4) Education Area Directors are expected to focus on outcomes and provide leadership and guidance concentrating in the eight domains: Language Development, Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Creative Arts, Social and Emotional

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Development, Approaches to Learning and Physical Health Development. In addition, the Executive Team completes the Programs Compliance Monitoring Instrument twice a year to determine compliance with Head Start Standards and established policies and procedures.

Daily decisions regarding program operations are delegated to the Executive Program Director by the Grantee Board. The Program Executive Director delegates the supervisory and functional responsibilities to the following personnel:

- Assistant Program Directors and Administrative Assistant for Personnel
- Department Directors

Correspondence is appropriately disseminated to the staff. All memoranda to Center Managers or other center staff requires review and approval by the Executive Director or the two Assistant Directors as appropriate. The Executive Team, Center Managers and Support Services Facilitators and Support Services Assistants meet regularly on a monthly basis. Meetings are also held on an as needed basis.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program maintains an internal records system that provides accurate information on component activities, financial management, and program operations and personnel. The Program also maintains a process with open communication to staff, parents, and the community which provides information regarding services and activities for children and families, financial status reports, resources within the program and community, the application process, etc.

Safety and Security

Surveillance systems were installed at all Program sites and in every classroom during 2007-2008 to increase the safety and security of all our children, all our staff and Program property. It has also been a very useful tool to address children and staff needs and to monitor program operations. With the expansion of network accessibility to all Program locations the use of the surveillance systems will also be expanded.

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45 CFR Part 1304.52[(a)-(k)] Human Resources Management

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has an organizational structure that facilitates the implementation of Federal Standards as revised January 8, 1998. Program functions have been assigned to qualified personnel. In the area of program management an experienced Executive Director for Head Start along with qualified staff provide leadership in the management of early childhood development and health services, including child development and education; child medical, dental, and mental health; child nutrition; services for children with disabilities; and family and community partnerships, including parent involvement activities.

This organizational structure supports the accomplishment of program objectives as well as addresses the major functions and responsibilities assigned to each staff position and provide a mechanism for proper staff supervision and support. Please refer to the Organizational Chart. (See Attachment 1)

Personnel Policies

The Hidalgo County Head Start ensures that staff and all consultants utilized by the Program have the knowledge, skills, and experience they need to perform their assigned functions responsibly. Additionally, the Program makes sure that only candidates with the qualifications specified in this part and in 45 CFR 1306.21 are hired.

All current and former Head Start parents receive preference for employment vacancies for which they are qualified. Staff and Program consultants are familiar with the ethnic background and heritage of families in the Program and are able to serve and effectively communicate with children and families with none or limited English proficiency.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program operates under the auspices of the County of Hidalgo, as such all personnel policies and procedures adopted by the Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court/Grantee Board are also adopted by the Hidalgo County Head Start Program through the Policy Council. The Program staff also follows the Civil Service Commission Rules as adopted by the County and as applicable to all employees. Civil Service Commission Rules and a set of Personnel Policies with amendments as related to Head Start Personnel are issued to all staff.

All employees of the Hidalgo County Head Start Program will be placed in one of the following three (3) classifications at the time of employment according to their present position or entry level for new employees: full time employee, part time employee, or interim temporary assignments.

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The Hidalgo County Head Start Program utilizes the job description format developed by the Program using the following procedure to develop and maintain job descriptions.

- Initial job description for positions new to the Hidalgo County Head Start Program will be developed by the Executive Program Director and approved by the Policy Council, the Grantee Board and the Civil Service Commission
- Job descriptions for all employees will be signed by the immediate supervisor and the employee upon employment
- Upgrading the job descriptions will be the responsibility of the immediate supervisor and/or the Executive Program Director and/or the Personnel Director
- A copy of the job description must be filed in the Employee's Personnel record
- Job descriptions for all staff are updated as needed

The Personnel Policies include employee management relations in general as well as employee grievances and adverse action procedures. Each employee is provided with a copy of the Personnel Manual on the first day of employment. Any changes or amendments to policies or procedures will also be presented to the Policy Council for its consideration.

A personnel file will be kept on each employee. This file is regarded as confidential material and shall be treated as such except as otherwise required by law. All correspondence, references, evaluations, agreements and disciplinary actions will be kept in the employee's file. The only persons with access to the file will be the employee, the Executive Director, Personnel Officer, Administrative Assistant, personnel clerks or secretary and individuals required by law or regulations. Interviewing supervisors will have access on a "need to know basis only" as determined by the Personnel Officer.

At a minimum, the following information will be included in all individual personnel records: applications for employment, job description, reference letters, T.B. Test, INS Forms I-9, new employee orientation checklist, date of employment, results of criminal history check, any and all personal action reports (PA's), any disciplinary action taken against employee, employee performance evaluations and termination notice, if applicable.

Disclosures of any information in the personnel record to persons or agencies not associated with the Hidalgo County Head Start Program require the written consent of the employee.

Information that shall be considered public information will be the employee's name, salary, job title and length of employment except as otherwise required by law. All

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personnel information is filed under lock and key and the Personnel Director is the guardian.

Staff Recruitment, Selection and Qualifications

Education and child development services are supported by staff and consultants, when necessary, with training and experience in areas that include: theories and principles of child growth and development, early childhood education and family support. In addition, staff must meet the qualifications for classroom teachers, as specified in section 648A of the Head Start Act and any subsequent amendments regarding the qualifications of teachers.

Health services are supported by staff and consultants with training and experience in public health, nursing, health education, maternal and child health, or health administration. In addition, the Program ensures that only a health professional is utilized when a health procedure must be performed by licensed/certified health personnel.

All nutrition service activities are directed by a staff member who is a registered dietitian. Mental health services are supported by staff with expertise in this area and consultants who are licensed or certified mental health professionals with experience and expertise in serving young children and their families. Family and community partnership and parent involvement services are directed by staff with training and experience in fields related to social, human, or family services, and with skills in assisting the parents in advocating decision-making for their families. Disabilities services are under the direction of staff with training and experience in securing and individualizing needed services for children with disabilities. The Program's fiscal administration is under the supervision of a qualified fiscal officer.

When a position becomes vacant, a personnel requisition is completed by the authorized personnel, and submitted to the Executive Program Director for approval and budget consideration. After approval, it is submitted to the Personnel Director who verifies the vacancy and correctness of qualifications. The requisition is then submitted to the Hidalgo County Personnel Office for posting. Postings are made internally for the first 2 weeks and if no selection is made, then the postings are made externally (newspaper). Job listings are sent to all centers. After a two (2) week period, the Head Start Administrative Assistant will receive from the Hidalgo County Personnel Office a list of qualified applicants to interview.

Interviewees are scheduled by the County's Personnel Director and the Hidalgo County Head Start Program (HCHSP) personnel carries out the interview process. The applicants' qualifications are reviewed to ensure that they possess the adequate

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skills and experience needed to carry out their functions and responsibilities. Current Head Start parents are given preference for employment vacancies for which they are qualified.

After an applicant is selected by the authorized supervisor, a recommendation is made to the Executive Program Director for initial approval. The Program Director then submits all recommendations to Policy Council for final approval.

At the time the employee is processed each employee will complete a form declaring any pending\prior criminal arrest\charges; any dispositions regarding child abuse or neglect, any child sexual abuse and violent felonies.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program adheres to the Civil Right Act of 1964, as amended, The Texas Department of Regulatory Services, and the Head Start Act of 1993 regarding criminal history record checks. Results are kept in the employee personnel file. The current personnel policies are consistent with the Department of Labor as they pertain to working hours, overtime, vacation, holidays and absences/leaves.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program evaluates new employees monthly during a one-hundred and twenty day (120) probationary period. The successful completion of the one-hundred and twenty day (120) probationary status denotes that the employee is eligible for all fringe benefits of the Program. All employees will receive a formal yearly evaluation during the month of November and a second one in May.

A wage and salary comparability study is conducted annually with similar agencies in the County of Hidalgo, as well as with other Head Start Programs. Employee benefits are evaluated annually to determine comparability to other social service agencies.

Included in the Personnel Manual are policies on nepotism, acceptance of gifts/gratuities, partisan activities and conflict of interest as well as penalties for infractions.

The Program's Training and Technical Assistance Plan reflects the areas of need as determined by the Self Assessment, the staff appraisal information and information gathered through personnel surveys. The plan includes development in the areas of planning, record keeping and reporting, ongoing monitoring, human resources, prevention and early intervention, health care tracking and follow-up, disabilities, curriculum, transportation, and child outcomes (See Training and Technical Assistance Plan).

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Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

The Head Start Program will not undertake on its own to address cases of child abuse and neglect. The Hidalgo County Head Start Program will cooperate fully with child protective service agencies in the community. Program staff will make every effort to retain in the Head Start Program children allegedly abused or neglected, recognizing that the child's participation in Head Start is essential in assisting families with abuse or neglect problems. The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has designated the Health Director to coordinate the following:

- Establishing and maintaining cooperative relationships with the agencies providing child protective services in the community and with any other agency to which child abuse and neglect must be reported under State Law, including regular formal and informal communication with staff at all levels of these agencies;
- Informing parents and staff of what State and local laws require in cases of child abuse and neglect;
- Maintaining updated information regarding community medical and social services available for families with an abuse or neglect problem;
- Reporting instances of child abuse and neglect among Head Start children as reportable under State law on behalf of the Head Start Program;
- Discussing the report with the family if it appears desirable or necessary to do so; and
- Informing other staff regarding the process for identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

Orientation and training will be provided for staff on the identification, reporting and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

The **Health Services Procedures Manual** contains detailed information and documentation on this process.

Staff Development for Head Start Employees

For several years the Program has implemented a process whereby it is "growing its own" teachers. The Policy Council and the Grantee Board have been very supportive of this endeavor and it has been the most important source of new teachers for the program. The process allows for our Program to pay for tuition and fees for any staff member who is pursuing an associate's or a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and who does not qualify for financial aid. A total of four (4) hours of release time per week after 3:30 p.m. is provided to each employee going to college. In addition, the Program staff will continue to conduct CDA classes for the assistant teachers to meet this requirement.

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Training and Technical Assistance Plan

Pre-Service Training and Staff Development

Every year the Hidalgo County Head Start Program prepares and delivers two (2) days of training on mandated issues to all staff. An additional six (6) to eight (8) days of training and staff development for its classroom and center support staff is also provided. The topics are derived from the following sources:

- Needs assessment surveys completed by staff
- Review of information from the Self-Assessment
- Review of the staff appraisals, disciplinary notices or improvement plans
- The Office of Head Start Monitoring Protocol
- Assessment of delivery of services for each department
- Feedback from monitoring of center and classroom activities
- Review of data submitted for each department
- Performance of children on the Learning Accomplishment Learning Profile Diagnostic (LAP-D)
- Performance of children on the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)
- Feedback from Executive Team Members
- New Head Start requirements
- Implementation of new policies
- Implementation of new curricula or new assessments
- Implementation of Program Plans
- Mandated Issues

Grantee Board and Policy Council Training

Once all the members of the new Policy Council have been elected and appointed, they will participate in a governance training conference specifically planned for them and the members of the Grantee Board. The conference sessions are conducted for three (3) days and include the following areas:

- Head Start Program Overview
 - Statistics
 - Philosophy
 - Management Systems
 - Administrative Structure
- Head Start Performance Standards
- Shared Governance Orientation
- Policy Council By-Laws
- The Budget Process
- Financial Responsibilities

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Other training is provided during the year to assist them in their roles on the Policy Council or the Grantee Board. Many one-on-one meetings are for the purpose of individualizing the training to the needs of the governing board/policy council members and to support them as they perform tasks which are new or different.

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45CFR 1304.53 Facilities, Materials and Equipment

Physical Environment and Facilities

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program provides a physical environment and facilities conducive to learning and reflective of the different stages of development of each child with appropriate space to conduct all program activities and address specific access requirements for children with disabilities. Each center is organized into functional areas that can be recognized by children and that allow for individual and child elected activities and social interactions.

The Program takes into account the inter-relatedness of cognitive and intellectual development, physical, mental health, and nutritional needs, and other factors that enable the child to function optimally.

All equipment, toys, materials and furniture necessary to meet the needs and to facilitate the participation of children and adults are provided to all classrooms. The equipment, toys, materials and furniture owned by the Hidalgo County Head Start Program (HCHSP) are supportive of the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children, they are age appropriate, safe and supportive of the abilities and developmental level of each child served, with the necessary adaptation for children with disabilities. Furthermore, they are accessible, attractive, and inviting to children. They are designed to provide a variety of learning experiences and to encourage each child to experiment and pursue their own interests.

All of the facilities owned or operated by the Hidalgo County Head Start Program meet the licensing requirements of 45 CFR 1306.30.

Hidalgo County Head Start employs personnel who provides for the maintenance, repair, safety, and security of all Head Start facilities, materials and equipment. These personnel ensure a center-based environment free of toxins, such as cigarette smoke, lead, pesticides, herbicides, and other air pollutants as well as soil and water contaminants.

Outdoor play areas at each center are arranged to prevent any child from leaving the premises and getting into unsafe and unsupervised areas. No child in route to play areas is exposed to vehicular traffic without supervision.

Hidalgo County Head Start Program conducts safety inspections annually to ensure that each facility's space, light, ventilation, heat, and other physical arrangements are consistent with the health, safety and developmental needs of children.

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The Hidalgo County Head Start Program currently operates forty-two **(42) centers** with a total enrollment of **3,570** children. Each classroom meets or surpasses the 35 square feet requirement of usable space per child. These centers accommodate two (2) to twelve (12) classrooms with each classroom encompassing an area of approximately 700 square feet, with 75 square feet of usable outdoor play space per child. Each classroom is supervised by a teacher with a child development associate degree (CDA) or associate's degree and an assistant teacher with a minimum of a CDA or undergoing training.

Service Area

The Commissioners' Court of the County Of Hidalgo is the Grantee Board for the Hidalgo County Head Start Program. The Hidalgo County Head Start Program is currently funded for three thousand five hundred and seventy (3,570) children who are served through the forty-two (42) centers located throughout the Hidalgo County area.

Center	Enrollment	Center	Enrollment	Center	Enrollment
Alamo	117	La Joya	88	Monte Alto	37
Alton	100	Las Milpas I	114	Palmview I	148
Donna I	136	Las Milpas II	51	Palmview II	148
Donna II	60	McAllen II	111	Palmview III	108
Donna IV	33	McAllen IV	51	Pharr	91
Edcouch	202	McAllen V	57	Progreso	57
Edinburg I	60	McAllen VI	51	San Carlos	80
Edinburg II	34	Vine Terrace	57	San Juan I	54
Edinburg III	51	Mercedes I	117	San Juan II	145
Edinburg IV	160	Mercedes II	34	Sullivan	94
Edinburg V	120	Mission I	80	Weslaco I	77
Elsa	57	Mission II	148	Weslaco II	74
Hidalgo	54	Mission III	51	Weslaco III	97
La Herencia	52	Mission IV	54	Western Rd	57
Total Centers 42		Total Funded Enrollment 3,570			

Hidalgo County Head Start Administrative Program Plan

45CFR 1305 Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program follows all guidelines as set forth by Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The Policy Council approves the priority guidelines for eligibility of all children to the Hidalgo County Head Start Program. Families are ranked in order as defined by the guidelines. The Policy Council is responsible to approve each application using a system which keeps each applicant's identity confidential.

The Program provides full day services to those children and families with special needs that justify full day services or to those children whose parents are employed or in job training with no care giver present in the home.

In addition to the full day program, at least ten percent (10%) of the total funded enrollment has been designated for children with special needs.

Low Income

As per the mandate of Section 511 of the Head Start Act, the Hidalgo County Head Start Program focuses primarily on children from low income families. One hundred (100%) percent of the children in the program come from low income families. Families may be eligible if their income is between 100% thru 130% of the poverty guidelines. (Ref: P.L. 110-134, ACF-IM-HS-08-01).

Income Verification Documentation

In order to implement this regulation regarding income, Hidalgo County Head Start uses the definitions of family and income found in the eligibility regulations (45 CFR Part 1305.2 Definitions.).

Family Definition

The poverty guidelines figures are directly dependent on the number of persons in a family. In order to determine eligibility, Hidalgo County Head Start must know the size of each child's family. In determining the size of the family the following definition must be used. Size of family is defined as all persons in the same household who are supported by the income of the parent(s) or guardian of the child enrolling or participating in a Head Start Program and is related to the parent(s) or guardian(s) by blood, marriage, or adoption.

Once the family size has been determined Hidalgo County Head Start then looks at the family income with the following definition.

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Income Definition

The term income means gross cash income and includes earned income, military income (including pay and allowances), veterans benefits, social security benefits, unemployment compensation, and public assistance benefits. With respect to a child in foster care, family income is the amount paid to the foster family on behalf of the child by a public or private agency.

Income as it is related to family size is the key component in determining eligibility for the Head Start Program. Verification of current financial status includes one of the following: W-2 form, Individual Income Tax Form 1040, Pay Stubs, written statements from employers, documents showing current status as recipients of public assistance.

Children whose families qualify for Public Assistance are eligible for Head Start Programs even if the assistance level exceeds the guidelines. Children from the lowest income families shall be given preference. (45 CFR Part 1305.4, Family Income Eligibility).

Once the family is found to be eligible for Head Start services, a Hidalgo County Head Start employee will complete and sign the application for admission.

Recruitment

A team effort among the Head Start staff throughout the centers is put forth to recruit Head Start Children in Hidalgo County. Pre-registration is held in the latter part of April before the end of the school year.

During this time letters, posters, and announcements are made to local churches, agencies, and families planning to return. Applications are taken on-site and are subject to a screening process. The family income plays a most important part in determining eligibility. Parents are required to bring the child's birth certificate and immunizations records.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program will recruit children who are three (3) and four (4) years of age on or before September 1st. All Head Start Centers are located strategically throughout Hidalgo County to better serve eligible children as close to home as possible.

Recruitment efforts are made throughout the school year with a major effort in April. All staff members are a vital part of the recruitment effort. Recruiting of disabled children is done in the same manner including Region One Education Service Center Child Find Program, Easter Seals and through screening and parent referrals.

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The Head Start Program maintains an outreach and recruitment process which insures participation of children of the most disadvantaged families on the target area. The Hidalgo County Head Start Policy Council, Grantee Board and Head Start Executive Director have approved a set of priorities which will serve as a guide in the recruitment effort. Such priorities are as follows: One hundred percent (100%) percent of enrollment must come from the most disadvantaged families and at least ten (10%) percent of those must be children with disabilities.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Executive Director will act as a liaison between the Head Start Office, Centers, and the community for children with identified disabilities.

The Director of Family Services and the Administrative Assistant of Public Relations will:

- Coordinate with all component directors.
- Work with other federal and local agencies to coordinate all services available to both Head Start personnel and parents.
- Work with and coordinate the recruitment of children with disabilities and volunteers.
- Design in-house instruments for recruiting for a specific task or avenue for reaching children with disabilities for example: Bulletins designed for boards in churches and private or social services agencies. Classified advertisements, designed for paid advertising in newspaper for, weekly, bi-weekly, or daily circulation. Public Service Announcements- designed for unpaid public service announcement by radio and television. News Release- designed for free publication at a specified time. This is updated so they may keep a copy once every three months of publication.

All applications are given equal consideration.

The application process includes the following:

- Names of family members and number of family members and their ages
- Information about the child, including age, sex, residence
- Income and immunizations verifications
- Provisions for immunizations
- Applications are thoroughly screened by a selected screening committee
(Refer to Family Services Plan)

All materials are available in the primary language of the families the program serves. All staff members are bilingual, thus assuring that all Head Start children and families receive services in their primary language.

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Recruitment Area

The entire County of Hidalgo serves as a recruitment area.

During the month of March prior to the enrollment year, recruitment procedures are implemented via door-to-door contact, parent information, posters, brochures, news advertisements, and local media. This process systematically seeks out the most disadvantaged homes and children regardless of race, creed, or color within the recruitment area.

Staff Assistance

Head Start employees assist families, as needed, in completing an enrollment application to ensure that all necessary information is complete.

Enrollment Opportunities

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program Enrollment Status Report is used to keep track of enrollment opportunities and meet funded enrollment slots. In the event that the center has met full enrollment, families will be placed on a waiting list. Children on the waiting list are ranked according to priority guidelines as approved by the Policy Council.

Selection Criteria

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program does not deny anyone the right to apply for services regardless of race, sex, creed, color, national origin or disabling condition.

The selection criteria is reviewed and approved by the Policy Council and the Grantee Board every year depending on the modifications or adopted changes.

Children Selection

The families of children applying for admittance to the Hidalgo County Head Start Program must meet income eligibility and age eligibility. Children will be selected upon verification of income and other pertinent information. All children that qualify for enrollment will be provided with either full day or part day services, provided that they meet the set criteria. Final approval will be granted by the Hidalgo County Head Start Policy Council.

Waiting List

In the event that the program is fully enrolled, families will be made aware that their children will be placed on a waiting list. Children on the waiting list are ranked according to priority guidelines as approved by the Policy Council.

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Head Start Participation

If a child has been found eligible and is participating in a Head Start Program, the child remains eligible throughout the enrollment year or until first grade is available in the school system. The Program may choose not to enroll a child when there are compelling reasons for the child not to remain in Head Start, such as when there is a change in the child's family income and there is a child with a greater need for Head Start services.

Funded Enrollment

At the time of enrollment, orientation and parent-teacher sessions are held. Parents are made aware of the importance of their child's regular attendance and the benefits that the child and parents will receive as a result of good attendance.

A vacancy is created by a child leaving the program or failure to participate and has gone through the appropriate transitional process. A child's slot shall be considered vacant when the child does not participate for a period of more than thirty (30) calendar days of un-excused absences despite the provision of family support services. (See Enrollment and Attendance Policies in Head Start, Federal Register, November 2, 1979, Definitions).

All vacancies in the Hidalgo County Head Start Program must be filled within thirty (30) calendar days. All vacancies occurring in April or May will not be filled in order to prevent inappropriate and incomplete services being delivered to the child.

A daily attendance report will be forwarded to the Head Start Administrative Office by the Center Manager. The Center Manager will obtain an attendance report from each individual teacher. Each teacher shall be responsible for identifying and referring to the Center Manager any child who has three (3) or more consecutive absences.

The following is a list of excused absences. In order to qualify as an excused absence, each specific situation must be documented. Excused absences are documented in the child folder as:

- A child is hospitalized;
- A child is incapacitated due to a serious illness or injury;
- A child contracts a communicable disease;
- A child has other health ailments which temporarily prevent attendance, such as asthma.
- There is a death in a child's family;
- A child cannot attend class because child has to receive medical treatment or therapy at the time when the class is being held.

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When absences are the result of factors other than those listed in the Enrollment Policy, the Hidalgo County Head Start Program will institute family support services for all children with three (3) or more consecutive days of unexcused absences.

The center manager or teacher will make a referral requesting that a home visit be made by the center staff member assigned to that family. The center staff member assigned will prepare a report of the home visit, which includes the reasons why the child has been absent and the date the child is expected to return to class.

A Family support services refers to home visits and other family contacts and services to support the child's regular attendance and to insure that the child and family receive full benefits of Head Start participation.

Second year participation

If a child has been found income eligible and is participating in the Head Start Program, he or she remains income eligible throughout that enrollment year and the succeeding year.

Average Daily Attendance

The calculation of the ADA is processed in two (2) steps. In order to receive a daily status report for social services purposes, a telephone report is given on a daily basis from all sites. The daily telephone report given to the administration office is as follows: Total enrollment, actual enrollment, total number present, total number absent, total number excused absences, names of children counted excused absent and reason for absences.

The documented attendance report is maintained daily by individual classrooms. This report is then submitted to the Family Services Component on a weekly basis for total calculation purposes. The calculated figures are as follows: total enrollment, total present, total absent, total excused absent, average attendance. (Total present divided by total enrollment will equal the percent in attendance.)

Program and Activity Calendar

After revision and analysis of the Program Plans, staff formulates and designs activities to compliment our program planning. The following calendar events illustrate the Program methodology of implementation of its activities to meet its objectives.

In order to comply with the Program Design of one-hundred sixty (160) days per calendar year, The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has established its Program Calendar for one-hundred seventy-two (172) days. In addition to this, the following

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make up day procedure has been established:

- In case of a Program interruption, any service days necessary to comply with the 160 days minimum, will be made up during the summer break.

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1306 Staffing Requirement, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance Patterns

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program meets the requirements of 45 CFR 1304.52(g), classroom staffing and home visitors, in addition to the requirements of this Section.

Staff is adequately supervised by the Center Managers in the Classrooms and the Education Area Directors in the field. Each of the four Education Area Directors, is given ten to eleven centers to supervise, depending on the number of classrooms in each center. They provide resources and direction in curriculum, personnel management and federal requirements.

Each classroom is staffed with a teacher and assistant teacher and whenever possible a volunteer.

Staff Qualification Requirements

All classroom staff complies with section 648A of the Head Start Act and any subsequent amendments regarding the qualifications of classroom teachers.

There are a total of one-hundred ninety-two (192) teachers in our Program. Currently one-hundred forty-six (146) or 76% have acquired an associate's degree (63%) or a bachelor's degree (14%) in early childhood education and the remaining have met the requirements for a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. In addition 63% of the assistant teachers (130) have the CDA credential and the Program is scheduling classes for the remaining assistants to complete this requirement.

Employment of Parents

During 2007-2008, approximately 46% of the Hidalgo County Head Start Program employees were current or former parents. During the same year, staff made a concerted effort to insure that parents who met the criteria were given priority consideration to fill the substitute vacancies for classroom staff. Many parents began their career tract as classroom volunteers and transitioned to jobs as teacher assistants, bus aides, disability aides or custodians and have gone to school and acquired the credentials to become teachers. This process presents evidence of a direct and lasting impact on Program efforts to break the cycle of poverty. In addition, parents have become better parents to their children.

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Volunteers

Recruitment of volunteers is a year round process. It is a joint effort by Family Services staff and Center Managers. Parents and community members are encouraged to volunteer. They volunteer at the center or may choose to do volunteer work at home. Public Service announcements are made to assist in this effort.

A number of different volunteer pools exist. They are recruited from adult day care centers, church organizations, Winter Texan population, etc.

All volunteers will receive training from the various departments in the Content Areas. The Center Managers are also responsible for providing training to any perspective volunteers who do not attend the initial training.

A special sign-in roster is used to track of all volunteer hours. The Center Manager or other supervisory staff working with the volunteer must sign or initial it to confirm the hours documented.

Throughout the school year volunteers are recognized on a monthly basis at the center level. Each center chooses volunteers and recognizes them by awarding them with certificates at the Center Committee Meetings. They are also featured in the Parent Areas with a small write up about the individual person.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program recognizes the volunteers, its parents and community volunteers at an annual volunteer banquet.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program allows a total of two fund raising activities during fall and spring. Funds raised from these events are utilized for taking children on special field trips, purchasing additional materials for the Centers or any other activities that the parents decide to do. Parents are given an opportunity to utilize their decision-making right as Head Start parents.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program uses Certificates of In-Kind Contributions to record non-cash contributions. Goods, space rentals, equipment rentals, non personal services and volunteer hours are recorded on it. Credit is given and contributions are compiled on Summary Reports at the center level by center supervisors. The contributions are recorded and organized according to classroom enrollees. The entire Center's In-Kind is then totaled and put on an In-Kind Summary Report. Once completed, it is submitted to the responsible personnel in the Finance.

The **Family Services Procedures Manual** contains detailed information and forms used for the recruiting of volunteers.

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Training

The Hidalgo County Head Start provides opportunities to volunteers to assist them in acquiring or increasing the knowledge and skills they need to fulfill their job responsibilities. This training is directed toward improving the ability of volunteers to deliver services required by Head Start regulations and policies. The training also includes information and training about the philosophy and goals of Head Start and the program options being implemented.

Center-Based Program Option

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has implemented a center-based option in order to meet the needs of the children and families as indicated by the community needs assessment. In addition prior to making final assignment of the child, consideration was given to such factors as the child's age, developmental level, disabilities, health or learning problems, previous preschool experiences, family situation and parents' concerns and wishes prior to making final assignments.

Head Start classes are staffed by a teacher and an aide or, whenever possible, a volunteer. Class is size-based on the predominant age of the children who will participate in the class. For classes serving predominantly four (4) or five (5) year old children, the average class size of that group of classes is between seventeen (17) and twenty (20) children, with no more than twenty (20) children enrolled in any one class. For classes serving predominantly three (3) year old children, the average class size of that group of classes is between fifteen (15) and seventeen (17) children, with no more than seventeen (17) children enrolled in any one class.

A class is considered to serve predominantly three year old children if more than half of the children in the class are three years old before September 1st.

All classes operate for five days per week for a minimum of six (6) hours per day and one-hundred seventy-two (172) days per year and all reasonable estimates were made of the number of days during the year that classes may be closed due to problems such as inclement weather or illness, based on experience in previous years. Provisions were made in the budgets and program plans to operate makeup classes and provide these classes, when needed, to prevent the number of days of service available to the children from falling below one-hundred sixty (160) days per year.

Staff is employed on an annual basis to allow them to participate in pre-service training, to plan and set up the program at the start of the year, to close the program at the end of the year, to conduct home visits, to conduct health examinations, screening and immunization activities, to maintain records, and to keep service component plans and activities current and relevant.

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The Hidalgo County Head Start Program developed and implemented a system that actively encourages parents to participate in two home visits annually for each child enrolled. These visits are initiated and carried out by the child's teacher. The child may not be dropped from the Program if the parents will not participate in the visits.

The Early Childhood Development and Health Services Plan contain specific duties and responsibility regarding these duties.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program provides more than six hours of class operations per day using Head Start funds and complies with all the requirements regarding the center-based program option found in the Head Start Standards.

The Program tries to meet the needs of Head Start families for full day services agencies since alternative enrollment opportunities or funding from non Head Start sources are not available for Head Start families needing full day child care services.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, fifty-eight percent of people twenty-five (25) years and over in Hidalgo County have a high school diploma, and 15% have a college degree. A look at the data gathered from the community assessment survey reveals that 48% of the respondents have a high school diploma, 3.6% had an associate's degree or certificate, and 4.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The educational levels of respondents' spouses were low as well. Only 38% have a high school diploma and 6% have an associate or other college degree. Employment status showed that 52.8% of the respondents were employed and 80% of their spouses were employed. Seven out of ten employed respondents and their spouses had full-time jobs.

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45 CFR Part 92 Subpart H Part 92.20, Fiscal Management

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has developed a written **Accounting Procedures Manual** documenting the financial management system that ensures Budget management, maintains control over current operations, and provides timely, accurate, current and complete disclosure of financial matters. The Micro Information Products (MIP) provides a computerized system of financial and personnel data collection capable of producing timely and accurate reports.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program operates its fiscal management policies as mandated in **45 CFR Part 92 Uniform Administrative Requirements for state and Local Governments and Title 2 Part 225 Cost Principles for Non Profit Organizations, State and Local Governments.**

Accounting and budgetary practices are carried out as outlined in the **Financial Procedures Manual** where individual cost elements, such as salaries, supplies, travel, etc. are identified with the fiscal records. The finance department staff responsible for preparing the budget is kept abreast of all applicable grant policies and costs allowable while maintaining interaction with the Federal Regional staff.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has established written accounting policies and procedures to ensure the internal control of all assets and program financial resources. (Refer to the Accounting Procedures Manual.) The financial management system ensures budget control over current operations and provides timely accurate, current and complete disclosure of financial matters. This system reflects the following:

- The validation of accounting records by source documents, such as invoices, vouchers, statements, canceled checks etc.
- The posting of transactions in a continuous and timely manner.
- A clear separation of duties and responsibilities between individuals so that no one person has access and control to financial operations procedures and records.
- A description of a chart of accounts.
- Budgeting control to preclude incurring obligation in excess of total funds, for grant object class and program account.

The Hidalgo County Head Start's written accounting and budgeting procedures are designed to allow the determination, malleability and reasonableness of costs. These procedures facilitate the comparison of budgeted costs to actual costs and the timely distribution of cost data to program managers as a management aid in the administration of their program.

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Administration costs to the Head Start Program are determined and identified. These costs are continually monitored and compared in order to comply with the **15%** administrative cost requirements. These costs are maintained substantially below 15%.

Non-Federal Share requirements are met through the allocation of in kind costs charged to the grant. The valuation of these costs is based on a fair and reasonable basis and is in agreement with the budget. The accounting records for the non-federal share contributions are supported by proper documentation.

Food costs are budgeted through the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Grant and are continuously monitored and compared with actual food costs recorded in the financial accounting records. The meals are accounted for using the TDA Guidelines to establish the number of meals for which reimbursement is claimed. All reimbursement requests are made within a reasonable time frame to allow for proper accounting and planning, please refer to the Nutrition Procedures Manual.

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45 CFR Part 92 Subpart C 92.36 Procurement Policies

The Procurement Procedures Manual has been approved by the Policy Council and Grantee Board. This manual provides a set of written requirements which when followed ensure compliance with **45 CFR Part 92; Subpart O & P part 92. (31, 32, 33, &36)**. Specifically the Procurement Polices requires the Executive Program Director or his\her designated representative to review proposed procurement to determine the need and or possible alternatives (i.e. Lease vs. Purchase). The Procurement Office is designated by the Executive Director to administer and review proposed purchases. The Procurement Office by virtue of the authority and responsibility conferred on him/her by the Executive Program Director shall ensure that the Head Start Program will implement the procurement of materials in a manner most advantageous for the Head Start Program. It is the policy of the Head Start Program Procurement Office to prepare bids that contain clear specifications which do not unduly restrict open competition and encourage the participation of small and minority owned businesses in the procurement process. Bids shall be awarded to the lowest and most advantageous bidder providing the best value which complies with all applicable bid requirements as specified.

The Procurement Office shall be responsible for the preparation of purchase orders and receiving of merchandise. The Procurement Office will compare the purchase order with the shipping and packing documents to ensure compliance with specifications and quantities. Should a discrepancy be found, the Procurement Office will note the discrepancy on the shipping document and notify the vendor immediately. Damage to any package shall also be noted in writing on the delivery ticket\packing documents and notice given to the vendor and shipping company. The purchase order will not be closed out and processed for payment until all materials ordered are received. Once the Purchase Order has been completed, the documentation shall be cross checked with the packing\shipping documents, closed out and forwarded to the Finance Department for payment.

A copy of purchases and additional back up documentation will be maintained in the Procurement Office. This information will be maintained with bid quotes and warranty information received from vendors as part of the permanent record.

Inventory

The Field Operations Director will maintain an inventory list of materials purchased and shipped which are valued over \$5,000.00 indicating an accurate description of the items, the serial number, the source of the equipment, who holds the title, the location, use and condition of the items, and the purchase price of the items. The Field Operations Office will also conduct annual inventories of all Hidalgo County Head Start facilities. This will include the inventory of consumable materials kept as stock items (classroom education materials, colors, paints, etc.). This inventory

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process will be used to assist the Program staff in the planning and budgeting process to eliminate the duplication of purchases for materials currently in the Program inventory.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program and its employees, officers, or agents shall not solicit nor accept gratuities or anything of monetary value from contractors or potential contractors.

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45 CFR Part 92 section 36 Contract Provisions

All contracts entered into by the Hidalgo County Head Start will comply with Federal, State and local laws and regulations and will be reviewed by the County of Hidalgo's legal counsel or legal counsel under contract for the Hidalgo County Head Start Program. All contracts will incorporate the appropriate provisions as stipulated in **45 CFR Part 92 Section 36**, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Administrative, contractual and legal remedies when required
- Termination cause
- Compliance with Executive Order 11246 of September 1965 entitled Equal Employment Opportunity as amended by Executive Order 11375 of October 13, 1967 and as supplemented by the Department of Labor regulations(41 CFR Chapter 60) on all construction contracts over \$10,0000
- Compliance with the Copeland Anti-Kickback Act
- Compliance with Davis-Bacon Act
- Compliance with Sections 103 and 107 of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards
- Notice of awarding agency requirements and regulations pertaining to reporting
- Access by the Grantee, Sub-Grantee, the Federal Grantor Agency, the Comptroller General of the United States, or any other authorized agencies to any and all records
- Retention of records