



Hidalgo County Head Start Program

Policy Council Agenda

DATE: October 20, 2010

SUBJECT: Discussion/Approval of the Administrative Plan

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

RECOMMENDATION: Administration recommends approval.

COST: N/A

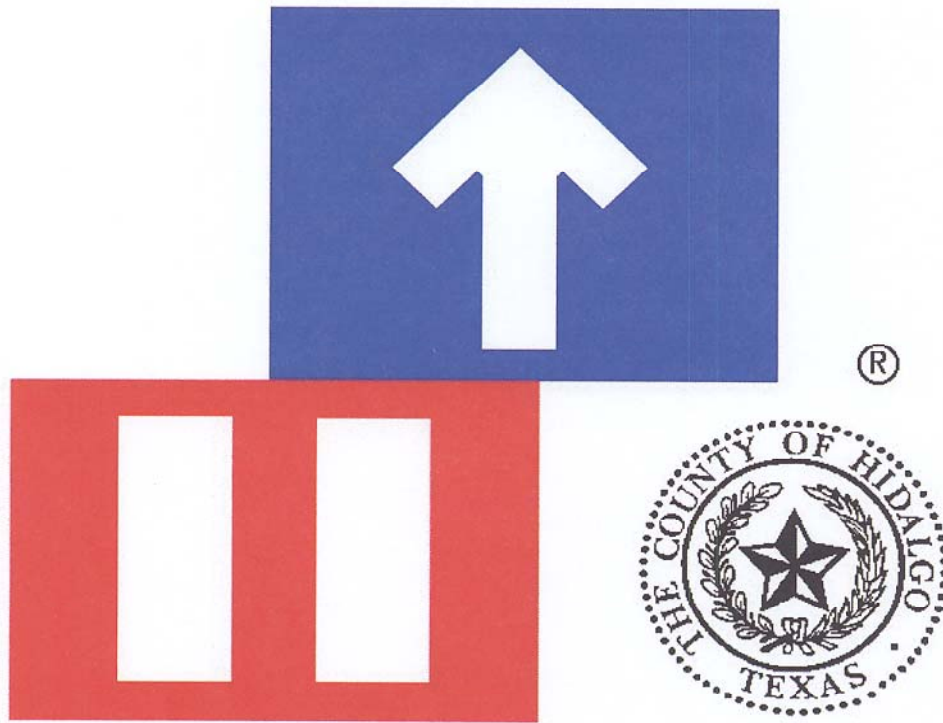
RELATED INFORMATION INCLUDES: Administrative Plan

INITIATED BY: Edmundo Garcia, Assistant Program Director 

REVIEWED BY: Teresa Flores, Executive Director

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL: 

Hidalgo County Head Start Program



Administrative Plan 2010 - 2011

Policy Council Approval:
Commissioners' Court Approval:

Hidalgo County Head Start Administrative Program Plan

The Hidalgo County Head Start Administrative Plan incorporates all procedures 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.**

Hidalgo County Head Start Program is center based, where 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 served basis. The home based services, where the home visitor provides comprehensive Head Start services at the home, is also an option that can be utilized under extenuating circumstances and authorization from the 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 promote the total development of the child, the family and community involvement through advocacy, training and technical assistance. The Hidalgo County Head Start Program facilitates the employment of staff from the service area. Currently 48.3% of the Hidalgo County Head Start Program staff is composed of Head Start 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, which in turn, will bring about a greater degree of social competence.

Revised: 10/10

Hidalgo County Head Start Administrative Program Plan

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 Programs 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 to this population of children and their parents, Head Start is committed to providing the training and education that fosters understanding of and involvement in the development of their children. In all cases, it is the commitment of Head Start to enable these parents to become involved in the development, conduct, 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 through which parents can 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, established 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 and Community Partnerships Procedures Manual** as well as in **the Policy Council By-Laws**. It is the intention of the selection process not to allow for the Grantee Board and Policy Council to have identical memberships and functions.

In accordance 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 comprised of 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 resources and services for low-income children and families. All members are limited, as specified in Head Start regulations and Policy Council By-Laws, to a one (1) year term and may serve the maximum of three (3) years.

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, criteria for defining recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities in accordance with **45 CFR Part 1305**.

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

Program Planning (Long and Short)

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.

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The service area for the Hidalgo County Head Start Program is 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 University of Texas Pan American.

The Policy Council reviews the CA to assure 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 for each area during the months of March through May. The Plans are first presented to Advisory Committees which are comprised of parents, staff, and professionals from the community. The Policy Council reviews the plans and any modifications recommended 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 along with the refunding Application.

An annual review for 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.

Program options are presented annually to the Policy Council and the Grantee Board for their review and approval during the months of May and 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.

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

*Actual Days of operation:	Monday- Friday 172 days
*Full Day Services:	7:30am to 5:30pm

The **Community Assessment** also includes the 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 hierarchal structure relative to supervisory and operational responsibilities of all program personnel is delineated in the Program's organizational chart. This instrument facilitates the flow of information up and down the organization. It also clarifies roles and responsibilities through the job description for each funded position in the program.

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

At the Policy Council level, the formal instrument for communication is the agenda. An agenda is developed 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 Centers. The agenda then is forwarded to the Grantee Board at posting time. All agenda items are presented to the Policy Council during the regular meeting scheduled on the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Agenda items are then submitted to the Grantee Board for approval at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Program Plans outline short term goals and objectives for all content areas and facilitates the distribution of tasks and activities to achieve the goals and objectives. Monthly Policy Council meetings are attended by representatives from the Grantee Board.

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Agendas and minutes of Policy Council meetings are sent for posting to each Center and as well as posted at the Central Office for public viewing. Copies of minutes are also sent to the Grantee Board after every Policy Council meeting.

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

Monthly meeting with administrative/management staff are held following the Policy Council Meeting. The actions taken by the Policy Council and other areas requiring attention to carry out the operative functions of the program at the central office and at the centers are included.

Center Managers are then required to meet with center staff to share the information from the Policy Council Meeting as well as the management meeting. Center meetings are held monthly or more frequently based on need.

Quarterly newsletter memoranda and announcements placed with local churches and social agencies, classified advertisement 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.

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.

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.

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

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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 Executive Director for distribution to staff, Policy Council Members and to the Grantee Board.

Provision for communications among Head Start parents and program staff, staff and community partners which outline plans for operational procedures and emergencies, are reflected in the content area procedures manuals for **Family and Community Partnerships (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 among all departments and with the majority of the centers. The Program has also installed a surveillance system. This system allows center staff and central office staff to observe classrooms in session for purposes of security and for monitoring staff activities. Recorded data serves to assist in training or other needed action.

Record Keeping and Reporting System

The Program's Record-Keeping and Reporting system establishes and maintains efficient and effective records that provide accurate and timely information regarding children, families, and staff and has measures in place to ensure appropriate confidentiality of this information. The Hidalgo County Head Start Program provides reasonable public access to information and to the Program's records pertaining to the Head Start Program.

Currently the Hidalgo County Head Start Program has invested time and resources in installing computer systems that facilitate communications and record-keeping for all locations.

The PROMIS (Program Resources and Outcomes Management Information System) is a computerized system whereby staff maintains a complete family history and produces reports for monitoring program activities in order to meet federal deadlines in health, mental health, family services, special services and nutrition. This is a web-based system networked to the majority of our centers and to all of the departments within administration central office. This year all centers not having access to the network platform will be connected thus ensuring that the flow of data to and from a central location can be fully utilized.

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Individual children's folders are utilized to organize and document in all areas of service. The file is divided into sections/areas of service. The file is divided into sections whereby data and progress are documented to meet program requirements and to meet individual needs of each child. It also tracks a child's progress in each area.

The MIP (Micro Information Processing) 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 contains a procurement module that produces electronic requisitions which maximizes internal controls and safeguards expenditures. The Financial Accounting Manual contains detailed information on the utilization of this system.

A standardized instrument is used to document and track children's performance in different areas. The LAP-D (Learning Accomplishment Profile Diagnostic) is a 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 progress. The 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 Education Services Program Plan.

ABRA is computerized system for managing and monitoring all personnel records. This system contains required data for each employee. It also serves to track and record existing vacancies.

Each content area has developed a procedures' manual to meet the documentation requirements of Head Start Standards. Please refer to the procedures manuals of Early Childhood Development and Health, Family and Community Partnership and the Program Management Plans as well as the Accounting, Procurement and Personnel Procedures Manual.

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:

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- ◆The Community Assessment
- ◆Self Assessment
- ◆Reviews by Executive Team Members of their areas of responsibility
- ◆The Training and Technical Assistance Plan
- ◆Staff Development information needs collected from staff, appraisals, and children's outcomes
- ◆Facilities inspections and reviews conducted by maintenance personnel and others
- ◆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. Then each member 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.

After input from the Budget Committee of the Policy Council, the Budget is then 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 then it is re-submitted to the Budget Committee for revision. Upon approval of the Grantee Board the budget is then presented to the Policy Council and the Grantee Board in September for their final review and approval, after which the Budget is officially submitted to the Department of Health and Human Services.

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 the Department of Health and Human Services for action.

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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 the 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 Self Assessment Teams are provided with 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 training. The following items 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 return findings.
- ◆The development of Corrective Action Plans to address findings.

Corrective action plans are developed, to include all areas of concerns, findings and weaknesses for each center. The format for the Corrective Plan includes: areas of concern for completion of tasks, performance standards, the action to be taken, person responsible, timeline and validation and follow-ups to insure areas of need are addressed.

The Executive Team Members take a leadership role in assisting each Center assigned to them in implementing the Corrective Action Plan when one is requested. Each corrective action plan is then validated and confirmed by Executive Team Members reviewing Plans for centers not assigned to them.

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

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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 to ensure the effective implementation of Federal regulations.

Since 2005 the Executive Team, composed of central office department heads, directors, coordinators and specialists, monitors program operations at the forty-three (43) centers and the two (2) kitchens. For the 2010-2011 school year the process has been completed in two (2) ways: (1) Each center is visited bi-weekly by at least one (1) member of the Executive Team and provides written feedback on the designated form. Center Managers are required to continue weekly observations of classroom activities and provide written feedback to teachers on the designated forms. (2) The Executive Team members conduct desk audits of the centers using the data gathered through the Program Resources and Outcomes Management Information System, PROMIS, and the reports and records submitted to carry out the goals and objectives of each department in delivering services and by observation of activities at the centers assigned using the on line surveillance systems. Contact is made via telephone when desk audits are conducted.

Three (3) Education Area Directors provide leadership and insure that the eight (8) domains are implemented and that there is accountability by the classroom staff to deliver appropriate instruction to reflect successful children’s performance in all areas assessed. Classroom instruction is monitored by the Center Manager assigned to supervise those teachers and by the Education Area Director for the area. Monitoring activities include the review of lesson plans, classroom observations completed personally and by reviewing reports submitted including LAP-D reviewing children’s progress, attendance reports, etc.

One (1) Area Director is assigned to focus on curriculum and instruction and the individualization of instruction. This director also works with the School Readiness projects implemented. The focus is on constant review of activities and teaching staff performance of strategies that facilitate school readiness with public schools. Focus is also on the use of assessment data (LAP-D) to plan and deliver instructions.

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Twice a year the Executive Team will use the Program Compliance Monitoring Instrument to assess each center's compliance with standards, rules and regulations and the overall success of Program operations.

The Self Assessment also assists in monitoring compliance with the Head Start Standards, Texas Minimum Standard Rules for Child Care Centers and other Program requirements.

Each Program Plan now includes a Monitoring Component to insure that all planned activities are carried out as proposed. Department Directors will utilize specific instruments, the PROMIS data, and specific reports to monitor such activities.

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

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 maintains a process with open communication between staff, parents, and the community, which provides information regarding services, and activities for children and families, financial status, resources within the program and community, application process, etc.

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 activities.

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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.

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 employed.

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 limited or no 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. (Please refer to Personnel Policies.) Specific Personnel Policies are acknowledged and reviewed by staff every year. The Policy Council approves all Personnel Policies related to the Head Start staff.

All employees of the Hidalgo County Head Start Program will be placed in one of the following two (2) classifications at the time of employment according to their present position or entry level for new employees: full time employees, part time employees.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program utilizes the job descriptions format developed by the Program using the following procedure:

- ◆ Initial job description for positions new to the Hidalgo County Head Start Program will be developed by the Administrative Assistant for Personnel and the supervisor for the position and submitted for approval to the Executive Director. Each job description is subsequently approved by the Policy Council and Grantee Board.
- ◆ Job descriptions for all employees will be signed by the employee upon employment.

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- ◆ Recommendations for upgrading the job descriptions will be the responsibility of the supervisor based on specific needs and functions of a position. Review and approval is required by the Executive Director, the Policy Council and the Grantee Board.
- ◆ A copy of the job description must be filed in the Employee's Personnel record.
- ◆ Job descriptions for all staff are updated as needed.

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. Access on a need to know basis only will be determined by the Assistant Directors, the Personnel Officer and/or the Administrative Assistant.

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, 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 employee's name, salary, job title and length of employment except as otherwise required by law. All personnel information is filed under lock and key. The Assistant Directors are the guardians of records for the Executive Team, the Center Managers and the Support Services Facilitators. The Personnel Officer is the guardian of records for non supervisory and classroom staff.

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: The theories and principles of child growth and development, early childhood education and family support. In addition, staff meets the qualifications for classroom teachers, as

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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 and 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 Director or designee for approval and budget consideration. After approval it is submitted to the Administrative Assistant for Personnel who verifies the vacancy, and correctness of qualifications. The requisition is then submitted to the Hidalgo County Human Resources for posting. Postings are made internally and externally for one (1) week and published in the newspaper and the County's website and if no selection is made then the postings are made externally (newspaper). Job listings are sent to all centers. After a one (1) week period the Head Start Administrative Assistant will receive from the Hidalgo County Personnel Office a list of qualified applicants for interview.

Interviewees are scheduled by the County's Personnel Director and appropriate Hidalgo County Head Start Program personnel carry out the interview process. Applicant's qualifications are reviewed by assigned staff to ensure that they have the required credentials and that the adequate skills and experience needed to carry their functions and responsibilities. Current Head Start parents are given preference for employment vacancies for which they are qualified.

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After an applicant is selected by a committee including the supervisor, a recommendation is made to the Executive Director for initial approval. Then the Executive Director submits all recommendations to Policy Council for final approval.

At the time the employee's application documents are 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 1998, regarding criminal history record checks and 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 one-hundred and twenty (120) day probationary status denotes that the employee is eligible for all fringe benefits of the Program, thereafter; all employees will receive a formal yearly evaluation at the end of the school year.

A wage and salary comparability study is conducted annually with comparable 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.

Staff Development for Head Start employees encompasses other facets. One is **Child Development Associates (CDA)** for teaching staff who do not have an Associate's Degree or higher in Early Childhood education and who are employed at one of the centers. Head Start bears the entire cost of the certification, with the exception of the filing fee.

Another facet is that of pre service and in service training for employees. These training sessions are skill based knowledge sessions and are done to enhance the abilities of employees at all levels of the organization. Seven to ten days are scheduled during Pre-Service for all center and central office staff.

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Educational leave, of up to four (4) hours per week, with pay, is available to eligible Head Start employees. This allows employees to attend approved job related courses.

Employees pursuing a degree or additional skill development in their assigned job position are eligible for Educational leave. Tuition and fees are paid for those pursuing an associate's degree or higher in Early Childhood or education.

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 and transportation, and child outcomes (See Training and Technical Assistance Plan.)

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

The Head Start Program will not undertake on their own, to treat cases of child abuse and neglect. The Hidalgo County Head Start Program will cooperate fully with child protective service agencies in our community, and 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 the agencies.
- ◆ Informing parents and staff of state and local laws requirements 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.

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- ◆ 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.

The Program has also prepared a comprehensive **Human Resources Management Plan** addressing Performance standard 1304.52 (a) through (k).

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.

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 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. The equipment, toys, materials and furniture owned by the **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.

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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 so as to prevent any child from leaving the premises and getting into unsafe and unsupervised areas and no child in route to play areas is exposed to vehicular traffic without supervision.

The 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.

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program currently operates one-hundred ninety-nine classrooms. Each classroom meets or surpasses the 35 square feet requirement of usable space per child. These centers accommodate 2 to 11 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 or higher and an assistant teacher with a minimum of a CDA or undergoing training. Some classrooms in the School Readiness Program also include a certified bachelor's degree teacher from the school district.

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 six-hundred and ninety (3,690) children who are served through the forty-three (43) centers located throughout the Hidalgo County area.

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Enrollment

Area I		Area II		Area III	
Center	Enrollment	Center	Enrollment	Center	Enrollment
La Joya	91	Alton	100	McAllen II	111
Palmview I	148	Western Road	57	McAllen V	57
Palmview II	148	McAllen IV	51	Vine Terrace	56
Palmview III	108	McAllen VI	51	Pharr	95
Sullivan	94	Mission I	80	Las Milpas I	114
		Mission II	148	Las Milpas II	51
		Mission III	51	Hidalgo	54
		Mission IV	55		
Area IV		Area V		Area VI	
Center	Enrollment	Center	Enrollment	Center	Enrollment
Alamo	117	Elsa	57	Edcouch	185
Donna I	136	La Herencia	52	Edinburg I	57
Donna II	60	Mercedes I	117	Edinburg II	34
Donna IV	33	Mercedes II	34	Edinburg III	51
San Juan I	54	Monte Alto	37	Edinburg IV	194
San Juan II	179	Progreso	57	Edinburg V	154
San Carlos	80	Weslaco I	77	U.T.P.A.	34
		Weslaco II	74		
		Weslaco III	97		
Total Centers 43		Total Funded Enrollment 3,690			

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

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program follows all guidelines as set forth by the Department of 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 approves each application using a system where each applicant's identity is kept confidential.

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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, 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 upon children from low income families. One hundred (100%) percent of the children in the program comply with income guidelines established for eligibility.

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. "All persons in the same household who are supported by the income of the parent(s) or guardian(s) 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.

Income Definition

"The term income" means "gross cash income and includes earned income, military income (including pay and allowances), veteran's 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."

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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. Two recruitment days are scheduled in the calendar whereby every center staff member including teachers, assistant teachers, support service facilitator, support service assistant, bus aides and bus drivers participate in door to door recruitment throughout the 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 available to local churches, agencies, and families planning to return. Applications are taken on-site and are subject to a screening process. The family income data is reviewed to determine 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) year 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 is 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. One hundred percent (100%) of the children come from the most disadvantaged families and at least ten percent (10%) of those are children with disabilities. All children and their families meet eligibility requirements. The requirements are:

Age - Children must be three years of age on or before September 1st of the applicable program year and is eligible until the child enters kindergarten. Children with disabilities are eligible for Head Start on the date that the child becomes three years of age.

Income - Families must comply with the Family Income Guidelines for Head Start Programs. [Ref: CFR, Vol. 74, No. 14]

Children with Disabilities - The Hidalgo County Head Start will NOT deny eligibility on the basis of disability or it's severity to any child. The definition of children with disabilities as defined in Head Start Performance Standards. [Ref: (1305.2(a))]

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 Coordinator of Special Projects will:

- ◆ Coordinate with all department 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

Hidalgo County Head Start Administrative Program Plan

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 & Community Partnerships 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.

Recruitment Area

The entire County of Hidalgo serves as recruitment area. The County is divided into six (6) areas and centers are clustered together. While efforts are countywide the center is the unit of organization for recruitment activities. When centers are closed during the summer, the central office serves as the “recruiting base”.

During the month of March prior to the enrollment year, recruitment procedures are implemented via door to door contact, parent information, poster, brochures, news advertisement, 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

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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.

Head Start Participation

If a child has been found eligible and is participating in a Head Start Program, the child remains eligible through 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.

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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. (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.

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 un-excused 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 class.

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“Family support services” means home visits and other family contacts and services to support the child’s regular attendance and otherwise 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 documentation 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 %).

Program and Activity Calendar

After revision and analysis of the Program Plans, staff formulates the design 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 and sixty (160) days per calendar year, The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has established a Program Calendar for one-hundred and seventy-two (172) days. In addition to this the following make up day procedure has been established:

- ◆In case of Program interruptions, 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 three (3) Education Area Directors, is assigned sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) centers to supervise, depending on the number of classroom in each center. One (1) Education Area Director addresses individualization of instruction and the School Readiness Partnerships. 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. Some classrooms may also include a certified public school teacher in the School Readiness Partnership

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. Teachers maintain a CDA certification and 94% have earned an Associate's or a Bachelor's Degree in Early Education

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 Texans 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.

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A special sign-in roster is used to track 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 carry out 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 Department.

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

Training

The Hidalgo County Head Start provides pre-service training and in-service training opportunities to program staff and 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 staff and 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.

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Choosing a Head Start Program Option

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has implemented the 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.

Center-Based Program Option

Head Start classes are staffed by a teacher and an aide or, whenever possible, a volunteer. Additionally some classrooms may also obtain the services of a certified public school teacher if they are participating in the School Readiness Program. Class is size based on the predominant age of the children who will participate in the class. For classes serving predominantly four or five 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 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. 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 (3) 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 our 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 twenty-eight (128) 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,

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screening and immunization activities, to maintain records, and to keep service component plans, activities current and relevant and to carry out recruiting activities.

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 Star 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.

45 CFR Part 92 Subpart H Part 92.20, Fiscal Management

The Hidalgo County Head Start Program has established 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) software 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 Financial Staff responsible for preparing the budget are kept abreast with all applicable grant policies and costs allowable while maintaining interaction with the Federal Regional Staff.

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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 operation 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.

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 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 Cost are budgeted through the **TDA** (Texas Department of Agriculture) **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 Policies 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 Program 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 material and in the quantities and specifications 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 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.

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Inventory

The Field Operations Director will maintain an inventory list of materials purchased and shipped which are valued over \$5,000.00 indicating 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 process will be used to assist the Program 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.

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 to 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 for 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 \$10,000.
- ◆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.

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- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Compliance with Disbarment requirements.