



HEAD START

An Office of the Administration for Children and Families
Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center (ECLKC)

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
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PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

TO: All Head Start, Early Head Start, American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Grantee Agencies

SUBJECT: Sequestration

INSTRUCTION:

As you are likely aware, in accordance with the Budget Control Act of 2011, a series of spending cuts, called sequestration, will cancel approximately \$85 billion in budgetary resources across the federal government for the remainder of the federal fiscal year. The President is required to issue a sequestration order today, March 1, resulting in spending reductions of approximately 5 percent for the remainder of the federal fiscal year. We estimate that approximately 70,000 children will lose access to Head Start services because of this reduction.

As a result, all Head Start, Early Head Start, American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start, and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start grants will be reduced by approximately 5 percent. All state, regional, and national activities, including training and technical assistance, research, and monitoring, will also be reduced by at least 5 percent. Proportional reductions across all these activities are required by Section 640 of the Head Start Act.

We advise all grantees to begin planning how they will alter their programs to operate at the reduced levels. As programs begin this planning process, we ask you to keep the following principles in mind:

- The first priority for all programs is to maintain a high quality of service provided to children and families and to ensure their health and safety.
- It is critical to minimize disruptions to currently enrolled children for this program year.
- We expect enrollment reductions, as well as workforce reductions, particularly in the upcoming program year.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) is committed to working with programs to ensure the provision of high-quality services continue during this challenging time. We understand the impact on the current program year will vary depending on when grantees receive their annual funding. We know that programs well into their program year will have to make decisions quickly to operate at this reduced funding level, possibly including early program closures. We will exercise as much flexibility and with as much assistance as possible to ensure the above principles can be adhered to.

OHS will be hosting an all-grantee call on March 1, 2013, to provide further guidance, including details on implementation. We also encourage programs to work closely with their Regional Office as you develop strategies and plans to move forward. Please direct any questions to your Regional Office.

Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families.

/ Yvette Sanchez Fuentes /

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