

# Overview of the role of the Head Start Collaboration Office





# **Head Start and Collaboration Office Overview**

# History

- The Head Start program funds direct federal grants to local organizations that provide **early education and comprehensive services** to low-income children and families.
- The purpose of the program is “to promote the school readiness of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development.” Programs must provide this “in a learning environment that supports children’s growth in language, literacy, mathematics, science, social and emotional functioning, creative arts, physical skills, and approaches to learning...”

# History Continued

- The program provides **Head Start (HS)** services to children ages 3-5 and **Early Head Start (EHS)** services to children prenatal to 3. HS and EHS services can be located in center-based (which can include public schools), home-based or family childcare settings.
- Beginning in 2015, a new type of EHS grant was awarded for **Early Head Start – Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP)** programs. **Comprehensive services** are an essential part of all Head Start programs. These services include “health, educational, nutritional, social, and other services that are determined, based on family needs assessments, to be necessary.”

# History Continued

- For a full history and overview of the evolution of Head Start, see <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/head-start-history> and <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/head-start-timeline>

# Collaboration Grants

- Head Start programs at the local community level receive funds for program operations directly from the Federal Government. With most policies being developed at the State level, a gap in Head Start representation was identified and Head Start Collaboration Offices (HSCOs) were first piloted in 1990.
- In 1990, 12 states (ME, NY, PA, OH, KY, WV, OR, NE, TX, SC, NJ, & MA) received funding to foster collaboration in their states.
- In 1992, 10 more states (CA, AK, VT, MD, NC, GA, MN, IA, CO, NM) were added to the pilot group.
- In 1997, the DC and PR were added, and in 2008, the American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) and Migrant Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) collaboration offices were added to round out the current slate of **54 HSCOs** across the country.

# The Purpose of the Collaboration Office



# Purpose & Priorities

- Congress has directed HSCOs to “facilitate collaboration among Head Start [and Early Head Start] agencies and entities that carry out activities designed to benefit low-income children from birth to school entry, and their families.”
- HSCOs provide a structure and a process for the Office of Head Start (OHS) to work and partner with state agencies and local entities. Together, these partners work to leverage their common efforts in support of young children and their families to formulate, implement, and improve state and local policy and practices.

# Priorities

- Assist in building early childhood systems by collaborating with entities involved in State and local planning processes to better meet the needs of low-income children from birth to school entry, and their families;
- Provide access to comprehensive services and support for all low-income children
- Encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start programs and other appropriate programs, services, and initiatives
- Promote better linkages between Head Start agencies and other child and family agencies that provide health, mental health, or family services, or other child or family supportive services.
- Augment Head Start's capacity to be a partner in state initiatives on behalf of children and their families
- Facilitate the involvement of Head Start in state policies, plans, processes, and decisions affecting target populations and other low-income families

# National HSCO Priorities

Partner with state child care systems,  
including EHS-CC Partnership initiatives

Work with state efforts to collect data on early  
childhood programs and child outcomes

Support expansion and access to high quality workforce  
and career development opportunities for staff

Collaborate with state quality  
improvement systems such as QRIS

Work with school systems to ensure continuity  
between Head Start and receiving schools

State and Regional priorities as needed

- Any questions?
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