



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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Program Performance Summary Report

To: Authorizing Official/Board Chairperson

Mr. Jamel Burgos

Albany County Opportunity, Inc.

333 Sheridan Ave

Albany, NY 12206 - 3133

From: Responsible HHS Official

Date: 03/04/2019

Dr. Deborah Bergeron

Director, Office of Head Start

From December 10, 2018 to December 14, 2018, the Administration for Children and Families conducted a Focus Area 1 (FA1) monitoring review of the Albany County Opportunity, Inc. Head Start program. This report contains information about the grantee's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards or Public Law 110-134, *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your governing body, policy council, parents, and staff for their engagement in the review process. The FA1 review allows the OHS to understand how programs are progressing in providing services in the 5-year grant cycle. The report includes the performance measures and the assessment criteria used to understand grantee progress for each performance measure. You can use this report to identify where your program was able to describe progress toward implementing program services that promote quality outcomes for children and families. Please contact your Regional Office for guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Your Regional Office will follow up on the content of this report and can work with you to identify resources to support your program's continuous improvement.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT

Ms. Carolyn Baker, Regional Program Manager

Ms. Neenah Bland, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director

Mr. Terry Kimball, Head Start Director

Glossary of Terms

Area of Concern	An area for which the agency needs to improve performance. These issues should be discussed with the grantee's Regional Office of Head Start for possible technical assistance.
Area of Noncompliance	An area for which the agency is out of compliance with Federal requirements (including but not limited to the Head Start Act or one or more of the regulations) in one or more areas of performance. This status requires a written timeline of correction and possible technical assistance or guidance from the grantee's program specialist. If not corrected within the specified timeline, this status becomes a deficiency.
Deficiency	<p>As defined in the Head Start Act, the term "deficiency" means:</p> <p>(A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff; (ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations; (iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management; (iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter; (v) loss of legal status (as determined by the Secretary) or financial viability, loss of permits, debarment from receiving Federal grants or contracts, or the improper use of Federal funds; or (vi) failure to meet any other Federal or State requirement that the agency has shown an unwillingness or inability to correct, after notice from the Secretary, within the period specified; <p>(B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or</p> <p>(C) an unresolved area of noncompliance.</p>



Program Design and Management

Program Design

Does the grantee's program design and structure take into account community strengths and needs?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described how the program took into account various characteristics such as ethnicity, language, disabilities, mental health, children in foster care, homelessness, and working families when designing the program. 1302.11(b)(1)
- The grantee described how the program selected option(s) and a location to meet the needs of children and families. 1302.20(a)(1)

Program Management

Does the grantee have an approach for providing effective management and oversight of all program areas and fiduciary responsibilities?

Monitoring Results:

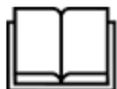
- The grantee discussed how the program, in collaboration with the governing body and the policy council, develops goals for the provision of program services. 1302.102(a)
- The grantee described the process for monitoring program performance and using program data to evaluate progress and risk, and to inform continuous improvement in all program service areas. 1302.102(b)
- The grantee discussed how the program plans to supervise staff and provide feedback to inform professional development opportunities and continuous program improvement. 1302.101(a)(2)
- The grantee described the process for using child-level assessment data and other program data to direct ongoing program improvement. 1302.102(c)(2)(ii)
- The grantee discussed how program leadership communicates progress to the program staff, policy council, and governing body. 1302.102(d)
- The grantee discussed how the program ensures budget and staffing patterns support provision of a full range of services. 1302.101(a)(3)

Program Governance

Does the grantee maintain a formal structure for program governance that includes a governing body, a policy council (or policy committee for delegates), and parent committees?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described the composition of the governing body and policy council and the grantee's strategy for leveraging their expertise. 1301.2(a)-(b); 1301.3(c)
- The grantee described how the governing body and policy council are equipped to meet their roles and responsibilities and to provide effective oversight. 1301.5



Designing Quality Education and Child Development Program Services

Alignment with School Readiness

Does the grantee's approach to school readiness align with the expectations of receiving schools, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and State early learning standards?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described how the program plans to align with the expectations of receiving schools, the HSELOF, and the State early learning standards. 1302.102(a)(3)
- The grantee described how the program plans to support successful transitions for children and their families moving out of Early Head Start. 1302.70(a)
- The grantee described why the program chose its curriculum, how it is responsive to the needs of the children, and how the curriculum will help the program meet school readiness goals. 642(f)(3)
- The grantee described how the program supports parents as their children's lifelong educators. 1302.34(a)

Effective and Intentional Approach to Teaching Practices

Does the grantee have strategies to ensure teaching practices promote progress toward school readiness?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described the program's strategies for ensuring teaching practices are responsive to and build on the developmental progressions of children. 1302.31(b)(1)(ii)
- The grantee discussed the program's strategies for providing nurturing and responsive environments for children including ensuring environments are communication and language-rich, promote critical thinking and problem solving, and encourage children's engagement. 1302.31(b)(1)(i)
- The grantee described the program's strategies to ensure the full inclusion of children with disabilities. 1302.61(a)
- For dual language learners, the grantee discussed its strategies to support bilingualism and biliteracy. 1302.31(b)(2)

Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness

Does the grantee have an approach for ensuring teachers are prepared to implement the curriculum and support children's progress toward school readiness?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described the qualifications required for managers and staff, and how staff currently meet those requirements. 1302.91(a)
- The grantee described how the program assists education staff in using data to individualize learning experiences to improve outcomes for all children. 1302.92(b)(5)
- The grantee described how the program identifies strengths and areas of needed support, and determines which staff would benefit from intensive coaching for all education staff. 1302.92(c)(1)

Home-based Program Services

Not Applicable.



Designing Quality Health Program Services

Child Health Status and Care

Does the grantee have an approach for ensuring the delivery of high-quality health services?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described the program's strategy for effectively monitoring and maintaining timely information on children's health status and care, including ongoing sources of health care, preventive care, and follow-up. 1302.42(a); 1302.42(b)(1)(i); 1302.42(c)-(d)
- The grantee described how the program leverages the expertise of the Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC), including Head Start parents, health professionals, and community members to learn about and support each child's physical and mental health needs. 1302.40(b)
- The grantee described how the program secured a mental health consultant to implement strategies to support children with mental health and social and emotional concerns. 1302.45(b)(1)

Health and Safety Practices

Does the grantee implement a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments and ensuring all staff have complete background checks?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described the program's approach for ensuring routine safety in the learning environment (indoor and outdoor facilities, equipment, and materials). 1302.47(b)(1)(ix); 1302.47(b)(2)(v)
- The grantee described the program's strategy for training staff on safety practices and procedures. 1302.47(b)(4)
- The grantee described how the program plans to ensure all staff abide by the program's standard of conduct. 1302.90(c)
- The grantee described the program's process for ensuring all staff have background checks, including the timeliness of the background checks. 648A(g)(3)



Designing Quality Family and Community Engagement Program Services

Family Well-being

Does the grantee have an approach for collaborating with families to support family well-being?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described the approach for supporting family goal setting and tracking family strengths, needs, and progress toward goals. 1302.52(c)(3)
- The grantee described the strategies for obtaining resources that support family well-being, either within the program or through community partnerships. 1302.53(a)(1)

Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports

Does the grantee have an approach for providing services that strengthen parenting skills?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described how the program plans to support parents in strengthening parenting skills and if they plan to use a parenting curriculum. 1302.51(a)



Developing Effective Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) Strategies and Fiscal Infrastructure

ERSEA

Does the grantee have strategies to identify and enroll children and families in the community most in need of services?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described how the program's recruitment strategy reflects the grantee's understanding of the characteristics and needs of the community's eligible children and families. 1302.13
- The grantee described how the program designed the selection criteria to identify and meet the needs of families most in need and described the program's plan for maintaining full enrollment. 1302.14(a)(1); 1302.12(i); 1302.15(a)

Fiscal Infrastructure, Capacity, and Responsiveness

Do the grantee's fiscal officer and the fiscal member or the advisor to the governing body have the qualifications needed to provide grant oversight?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described the qualifications (experience and education) of the fiscal officer primarily responsible for the grant award(s). 1302.91(c)
- The grantee identified the member or the advisor to the governing body with a background and expertise in fiscal management or accounting and how the program uses his or her expertise. 642(c)(1)(B)

Does the grantee have a budget development and revision process that includes stakeholders and appropriate approvals, and ensures continuous alignment with program design, goals, and objectives?

Monitoring Results:

- The grantee described the budget development process. 642(c)(1)(E)(iv)(VII)(aa)-(bb); 642(c)(2)(D)(iii)-(iv); 75.308



Program Highlights

Program highlights include information about your program's unique or innovative service delivery.

Alignment with School Readiness

In an effort to help children develop an increasing ability to understand and to use language to communicate, the grantee implemented a multi-generational approach to improve the language and literacy skills of children and families. Through a partnership with the Charles Touhey Foundation in Albany, New York, Head Start children and families living in the city of Albany received one book per child, per month. Families built home libraries and parents learned about literacy activities to do with their children. Grantee and Foundation staff worked together to create a list of culturally diverse and developmentally appropriate books. Monthly, teachers included the selected book in their lesson planning. For example, one book read in class was titled, *I Love My Hair*. Staff converted the dramatic play area of the classroom into a hair salon, and the class talked about how one child's hair differs from another's. Staff also welcomed families into the center once a month for a book-focused literacy event. For example, for the book *Everyone Eats Rice*, teachers shared with parents how to make rain sticks (shaker rhythm instruments) with rice and talked about recipes from different cultures using rice. The project resulted in 93 percent of the program's children going to kindergarten either achieving or exceeding expectations for academic readiness per the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment results, which surpassed the program's goal of 90 percent. In addition, the Director stated parents shared how the program enhanced their own reading skills and given them more confidence to read to their children. Since 2006, the partnership has impacted over 4,200 Head Start children and their families by providing over 28,000 culturally diverse and developmentally appropriate books to support language and literacy.

Alignment with School Readiness

The grantee and three of its receiving school districts worked together to ensure blended Head Start and Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) classrooms, and stand-alone UPK classrooms were consistent in how they prepared children for kindergarten. Albany City, Watervliet, and Green Island, New York school districts chose to implement the grantee's curriculum, the Creative Curriculum, and child assessment tool, Teaching Strategies GOLD, that were aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF) and the New York State Early Learning Framework. The grantee and UPK classroom staff met monthly to discuss their plans to teach lesson themes, like animals and the All About Me child and family focus unit, take-home activities for parents, and kindergarten teacher expectations such as self-regulation skills. This partnership supported approximately 300 of the grantee's children's preparation for the transition to kindergarten through similar instruction, behavior expectations, and familiar surroundings.