



## Memorandum – December 7, 2007

To: Pre-K Now grantees and partners  
Re: State Advisory Councils in *Head Start* reauthorization

Questions?  
Contact: Matt Smith  
Federal Policy Fellow  
[msmith@preknow.org](mailto:msmith@preknow.org)

### Overview

On November 11, 2007, the U.S. House and Senate passed a bill to reauthorize *Head Start*. The legislation contains several new features, including a requirement that states create State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care (hereafter, “Councils”) to improve coordination and collaboration among *Head Start* agencies, pre-k programs, and other early childhood education providers. This memo summarizes the key requirements for the new Councils.

**Council Designation:** The *Head Start* reauthorization requires the governor of each state to designate or appoint a Council. The Council may be an existing entity that is modified to meet the membership requirements established by Congress or an entirely new body. The governor is also instructed to appoint an individual responsible for coordinating the Council’s activities.

**Funding:** The *Head Start* reauthorization provides for one-time start-up grants of not less than \$500,000 to states that wish to draw on federal funding to support their Councils. States must apply for the grants, and they are awarded competitively. The grant lasts for a period of three years and requires a 70 percent state match toward “development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care.”

A complicated funding formula allocates the overall annual appropriation and determines priorities for funding *Head Start* programs. In general, the amount of funding provided for the Councils will depend on the total appropriation made for *Head Start* in a given fiscal year and a series of other “reservations” of funds for specific purposes. Unlike essential program activities such as maintaining the prior-year funding levels and providing staff with training and technical assistance, funds for the Councils may not be provided for a given fiscal year if the total annual appropriation is not sufficient to cover the preceding expenditures. [For more details, see *Head Start* Funding Formula below.]

**Membership:** The legislation requires membership by persons representing a range of early childhood education services and state government agencies. The governor may appoint additional members at his or her discretion. [For more details, see Membership Requirements for Councils below.]

**Tasks:** Each state that applies for a start-up grant must submit an application to the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services describing how the Council will perform certain required activities. The Council will assess the state's early childhood education system and make recommendations as to how services could be improved by increasing collaboration. [For more details, see Task Requirements for Councils below.]

### **Head Start Funding Formula**

The legislation requires the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services to provide all *Head Start* agencies (including *Early Head Start*, Indian, and migrant and seasonal *Head Start*) with funding equal to the prior year's funding level. The Secretary is also required to provide the same amount each year for state collaboration grants as was provided in fiscal year 2007.

Between 2.5 percent and 3 percent of the total appropriation for a given fiscal year is set aside for training and technical assistance. The bill also instructs the Secretary to allocate up to \$20 million for specific research, demonstration, and evaluation activities, and up to \$42 million for discretionary purposes, including monitoring and corrective action for agencies that fail to meet program performance standards.

After providing funds for the above purposes, the Secretary is instructed to provide a cost-of-living increase for each *Head Start* and *Early Head Start* agency, including \$10 million for *Indian Head Start* and *Early Head Start* agencies to increase enrollment. The bill includes alternate procedures for awarding funds if the overall *Head Start* appropriation is not sufficient to carry out these activities.

Any funds remaining after the above obligations are met must be set aside as follows: 40 percent for quality improvements; 45 percent for program expansion; and 15 percent for start-up grants to states' Councils. One exception to this rule exists: no funding will be set aside for the Councils if the following circumstances occur:

- The total cumulative amount reserved for the Councils for all preceding fiscal years is less than \$100 million; and
- Less than \$15 million was reserved for the Councils in the preceding two fiscal years and the Secretary received approvable applications for those funds.

### **Membership Requirements for Councils**

A Council is required to include the following members:

- The State Director of Head Start Collaboration;
- A representative of the state educational agency;
- A representative of local educational agencies;
- A representative of institutions of higher education in the state;
- A representative of the state agency responsible for early childhood under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- A representative of the state agency responsible for health or mental health care;
- A representative of local providers of early childhood education and development services;

- A representative from *Head Start* agencies located in the state, including migrant, seasonal, and Indian *Head Start* programs;
- A representative of the state agency responsible for child care; and
- Representatives of other entities as determined by the governor.

### **Task Requirements for Councils**

A Council is required to perform the following tasks:

- Conduct a statewide needs assessment;
- Identify opportunities for collaboration and coordination among entities carrying out federally funded and state-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs;
- Develop recommendations for increasing the participation of children in existing federal, state, and local early childhood education and child care programs;
- Develop recommendations for establishing a unified data collection system for publicly funded programs offering early childhood education, development, and services;
- Develop recommendations for a statewide professional development and career plan for early childhood education and care;
- Assess the capacity and effectiveness of two- and four-year public and private institutions of higher education toward supporting the development of early childhood educators;
- Make recommendations for improvements in state early learning standards, as appropriate; and
- Tasks as assigned by the governor.