

Milwaukee Public Schools Head Start 05CH010537

Quality Improvement

Application and Budget Justification

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Summary of Current Head Start Program

Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) is home to Milwaukee's most experienced Head Start program. The program provides high-quality, full-day, center-based programming five days per week for four-year-olds and full-day and half-day programming for three-year-olds. The program serves 1,290 children and their families from low-income households at 39 sites throughout the city of Milwaukee. The MPS Head Start program strives to be a model collaborative educational agency promoting individual growth and personal achievement for children and their families.

Needs

The current Head Start grant supports 18 family partnership associates (FPAs). However, there are currently seven position vacancies, resulting in an average caseload of approximately 132 families per FPA. In addition, the FPAs are classified as 10-month employees, 75% FTE positions, or thirty hours per week. This is extremely challenging and does not allow the program to sufficiently serve families and their increasing needs. By working quickly to fill vacancies and providing an opportunity for additional hours to the current FPAs, caseloads will be more manageable, which will enable the program to strengthen family services for participants. The FPAs will build relationships utilizing relationship-based competencies and provide more individualized family support. Moreover, additional summer and weekend hours for the FPAs will help to decrease the amount of wait time during the enrollment process; which takes place during high peak times during the summer months, non-school days, and evening hours. Additional staffing hours that are beyond the typical 6-hour work day are necessary to strengthen families, enhance relationships, expedite registration, and recruit additional families to re-engage in their child's schooling experience. Re-engaging families will help

prepare students for kindergarten and will allow staff to focus on family goals such as but not limited to obtaining safe housing, completing additional education, securing jobs, and obtaining child care. Additionally, to support schools during the transition to in-person services, extra hours are allotted to support the school-based paraprofessionals beyond the six-hour workday for the arrival and dismissal of students based on school needs. The support during this time can include but is not limited to, connecting with families at arrival and dismissal to share any pertinent information about their child, and ensuring a successful transition from home to school.

The MPS Head Start Program strives to build positive relationships and partnerships with all key stakeholders. That said, the program is working to reignite the father's engagement. Per the performance standard 1302.50 Family Engagement:

- a. *Purpose.* A program must integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children's learning and development. Programs are encouraged to develop innovative two-generation approaches that address the prevalent needs of families across their programs that may leverage community partnerships or other funding sources.
- b. *Family engagement approach.* A program must:
 - i. Recognize parents as their children's primary teachers and nurturers and implement intentional strategies to engage parents in their children's learning and development and support parent-child relationships, including specific strategies for father engagement;

According to research, both the quality and quantity of father interactions with young children matter. More frequent and positive father involvement impacts children's social and emotional development and cognitive skills (McWayne, Downer, Campos, & Harris, 2013). Nonresident

father involvement in child-related activities and positive father-child relationships are associated with children's social and emotional well-being, academic achievement, and behavioral adjustment (Adamson & Johnson, 2013). Fathers' playfulness with their toddlers boosts their children's vocabulary skills in prekindergarten. Mothers' playfulness is related to children's emotional regulation. Fathers interact with their children differently than mothers (Pruett, 2016). Not better, or worse, but in different ways that positively impact the child.

Quality Improvement Implementation

In an effort to alleviate higher family caseloads, the Head Start program will work efficiently to fill the seven FPA positions, which will reduce caseloads as well as work-related stress. This will allow the program to retain qualified FPAs and give individualized attention while effectively engaging families, resulting in stronger relationships. Consequently, families will feel an increased level of support and engagement from the Head Start program. They will be more likely to participate in district programmatic and school events, programs, parent committees, and policy council meetings. While the district continues to work to fill vacancies, QI funding will support additional hours and continue to, thus decreasing caseloads from an average of 132 families to an average of 88 families per FPA.

Additional staffing hours for the secretaries, social workers, school-based paraprofessionals, FPAs, nurse associates, and the nurse technician will benefit the Head Start program by strengthening families, enhancing relationships, expediting registration, recruiting families, and providing professional development and training focused on trauma-informed care for staff and families. The flexibility of additional hours outside of the typical work day will allow the secretaries and FPAs to assist the Head Start program during peak registration times and MPS district-wide recruitment and enrollment events. FPAs will be able to work additional hours to support families in crisis, assist with registrations, and participate in recruitment events. Health

and mental health staff will be able to make use of additional hours to provide professional development and support for staff as well as training and support for families. The additional hours allotted to the school-based paraprofessionals, who are only 10-month staff from September - June, are to support during the arrival and dismissal of students. An increase was noted from the previous application in 2020 and will support the additional identified need for safety as a direct result of COVID-19 and continuously pivot based on each school's needs. The additional hours will support the program during this transitional period.

Head Start will partner with community organizations and research opportunities to extend community services to fathers during the 2023-2024 school year by:

- Invite current and former fathers to contact community partners they know;
- Developing networks, peer-to-peer groups, and volunteer opportunities that support fathers' goals and strengthen connections to other fathers and community resources;
- Emphasize the importance of recruiting fathers and inviting their participation in the program; and
- Build collaborations across organizations to ensure continuity of service delivery for fathers and their families.

In addition to the extra hours, the QI funding will support annual raises, not covered by COLA funds for the Secretaries, Nutrition Technician, Social Workers, and Student Enrollment Assistants, along with corresponding increases to Fringe Benefits for these positions. The QI budget reflects the 8% district-wide COLA increase for every staff member in the upcoming year. MPS is providing a COLA increase that exceeds the 5.6% provided by the Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families.

In addition to re-engaging the fathers in the Head Start Program, MPS has noticed that families have an increasing need for support related to stress and additional mental health needs. The

MPS Head Start administrative team will continue meeting the mental health needs of families by providing training to address this need. QI funds will support attending training in 2023-2024 to continue building background knowledge that will in turn be provided to support families during the school year. Additionally, QI funds will be used to purchase materials and resources to support the implementation of the rollout of the Fatherhood Initiative.

The Quality Improvement Funds will largely cover the expenses of the equipment and installation for 6 tot lots. to update and rebuild playgrounds at our Head Start sites.

4. Objectives, Outcomes, and Evaluation

As the Head Start program hires additional FPAs, we expect to see decreased caseloads, increased communication with parents, increased participation in policy council meetings and parent committees, and an increase in the attainment of family goals. Attendance at policy council and parent meetings will be monitored by program staff through sign-in sheets.

Qualitative and quantitative data will be collected through surveys and ChildPlus reporting to determine family goal progress and family satisfaction with focused support and services to determine program effectiveness.

Additional staffing hours for the secretary, social worker, nutrition technician, and the FPA's will allow Head Start staff to participate at higher levels of recruitment and enrollment, resulting in full enrollment of the program as reflected in monthly Head Start Enterprise System reporting.

The additional hours for FPAs will increase parent satisfaction, as measured through surveys, and higher student attendance rates, as measured by monthly attendance reports. Supplemental hours beyond the typical work day for supporting Head Start staff, such as mental health and health staff, will result in the provision of additional support and community resources to families and fulfilling program requirements such as vision screenings and dental exams, more efficiently as measured by ChildPlus reporting. The additional hours allotted to the school-based

paraprofessionals during the arrival and dismissal of students will support the identified need for safety.

By focusing on the Fatherhood Initiative, the MPS Head Start program will notice an increase in participation in parent-teacher conferences, chaperoning field trips, and attendance in Policy Council and Parent Meetings, as the MPS Head Start program is committed to strengthening and enhancing relationships, engaging fathers and/or male figures. As a result, the program will help build stronger and healthier families, that will impact the social and emotional learning in the classroom, and within families, and improve student outcomes. MPS Head Start students will exit the program ready for success in school, and families will be prepared to support their children’s lifelong learning.

Budget Narrative and Justification

Title	Positions/ Hours	Federal Share	Annual Salary/Hourly	Federal Share
PERSONNEL				
Extra Hours (Nurse Associates)	300 hours	300 hours	\$24.01	\$7,203
Extra Hours (FPA)	400 hours	400 hours	19.63	\$7,852
Extra Hours (Secretary)	100 hours	100 hours	\$19.63	\$1,963
Extra Hours (Nutrition Technician)	300 hours	300 hours	\$18.40	\$5,520
Extra Hours	300 hours	300 hours	\$19.63	\$5,889

(Paraprofessionals)				
Secretary Annual Increase	3	3	\$3,746	\$11,239
Nutrition Technician Annual Increase	1	1	\$2,328	\$2,328
Social Worker Annual Increase	2	2	\$6,868	\$13,736
Student Enrollment Assistant Annual Increase	1	1	\$5,078	\$5,078
TOTAL SALARIES				\$60,808
FRINGE BENEFITS (51%)				\$31,012
TOTAL				\$91,821
TRAVEL				\$0
EQUIPMENT				\$0
SUPPLIES				\$15,000
CONTRACTUAL				\$314,495
CONSTRUCTION				\$0

OTHER	\$0
TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES (benefits, extra hours, salary, supplies, contractual)	\$421,316
INDIRECT CHARGES (4.6%)	\$4,914
TOTALS	\$426,229
TTA	\$0
TOTAL BUDGET	\$426,229

PERSONNEL

Extra hours for the nurse associate and a nutrition technician are needed to support the processing of student health records, documenting immunization records in Infinite Campus (district student database), evaluating dietary needs, and obtaining the required documentation from the medical provider. The average hourly rate for the nurse associate is \$24.01 for 300 extra hours. The average hourly rate for a nutrition technician is \$18.40 for 300 extra hours.

This permanent increase will be added to the base of the grant.

Duties of the family partnership associates include completing Head Start enrollments and family partnership agreements, attendance monitoring and follow-up visits, and providing support for families in their effort to ensure the completion of required health services. The FPAs work 10 months for 30 hours/week. Extra hours will be offered during the peak time of enrollment specifically for June, July, and August. Extra hours will also be offered throughout the school year to support family and student services to ensure sufficient support for the program on the weekends and during non-school hours.

Extra hours for FPAs (approximately 16 hours per FPA) and secretaries (approximately 75 hours per secretary) are needed to cover peak activity months for enrollment during the summer of June, July, and August. Extra hours will also be offered throughout the school year to support family and student services to ensure sufficient support for the program on the weekends and during non-school hours. The average hourly rate for FPAs is \$19.63 for 400 extra hours for the 18 projected FPAs (\$7,852). The average hourly rate for the secretary is \$19.63 for 100 extra hours for secretaries (\$1,963). This permanent increase will be added to the base of the grant. Extra hours for the teacher assistants are for support beyond the six-hour workday. The additional hours allotted to the school-based paraprofessionals during the arrival and dismissal of students support the identified need for safety. The average hourly rate for the teacher assistant is \$18.74 for 300 extra hours (\$5,622) to support an increased level of classroom support to ensure that students arrive and return home safely. This permanent increase will be added to the base of the grant.

Annual Increases for the (3) Secretaries (\$11,239), (1) Nutrition Technician (\$2,328), (2) Social Workers (\$13,736), (1) Student Enrollment Assistant (\$5,078) will be covered through Quality Improvement. This funding will be used for permanent, base-building salary increases awarded to Head Start staff leading into the 2023–24 school year.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Fringe benefits are budgeted at a district average rate of 51.0%; this includes Social Security, pension, and insurance for employees. The total budget is \$31,012.

EQUIPMENT – Not applicable.

SUPPLIES

Consumable supplies are budgeted for \$15,000 for training and marketing materials.

CONTRACTUAL

Conference – (\$10,000)

\$10,000 is budgeted for three staff members to travel to the National Head Start Parent and Engagement Conference on December 4-7, 2023. This conference will enable our staff members to better support the fatherhood initiative. A collaboration with community agencies will occur to provide strategies that build the capacity of the fathers and father figures.

Tot Lot Updating, Construction, and Installation – (\$304,495)

\$304,495 is budgeted for the updating of equipment and installation of 6 tot lots at our Head Start Sites with the highest need, particularly those that have elementary-aged playgrounds. In order to keep all Head Start students safe, these playgrounds will be replaced with age-appropriate tot lots to keep the health and safety of Head Start students in mind. This will be a permanent increase to the budget and will be used to ensure that student safety is top of mind each school year. Having an updated tot lot will improve the quality of the program by having the equipment to teach the students skills inside and outside the school building. New consumables and classroom safety measures will be addressed, ensuring all students are safe when in classrooms and outside during recess.

OTHER – Not Applicable.

CONSTRUCTION – Not applicable.

TOTAL DIRECT CHARGES

The total direct charges equal \$421,764.

TOTAL INDIRECT CHARGES

The MPS-approved indirect rate is 4.6%. This is calculated on all direct costs with the exception of contractual line items. The total amount budgeted is \$4,914. Attached is the document that establishes the indirect rate agreement with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

NON-FEDERAL SHARE

MPS has committed \$85,246 in non-federal resources. MPS will match the federal share of this project through transportation costs. Approximately 70% of three-year-old students in MPS participate in district-provided school bus transportation. The average cost per three-year-old pupil is \$2,517 per the MPS Department of Transportation. This is based on a \$30,208 annual cost per bus route, serving approximately 12 students per route. Therefore, the district commits to the costs associated with transporting 70% of the 981 three-year-old students to be served by this project (687 students) at a cost of \$2,517 per student for a \$1,729,179 total cost. The district has identified \$85,246 as the non-federal share to meet the requirement.