



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

Basic Head Start Facts

Overview: Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive child development program that has served low-income children and their families since 1965. Head Start actually consists of two programs: Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS). HS is a comprehensive early childhood development program primarily serving low-income preschool-age children and their families. Established during the 1994 Reauthorization of HS, EHS is a comprehensive early childhood program serving primarily low-income children prenatal to age three, pregnant women, and their families. Funding for these programs go directly from the federal government to local grantees. The federal government provides 80 percent of the yearly cost to operate HS and EHS programs, and the remaining 20 percent must come from a “local match” or “in-kind” contributions, which may be in the form of monetary contributions, donations of goods or services, or volunteer hours. HS and EHS programs serve children in families earning income at or below the federal poverty level, which for a family of four in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia is \$22,050 during Fiscal Year 2009.¹

Grantees and Delegate Agencies: There are 2,599 grantees and delegate agencies that run 17,975 Head Start and Early Head Start centers (excluding family child care homes) and 49,100 classrooms. Grantees and delegate agencies include:

- Community Action Agencies (31%)
- Public/Private School Systems (16%)
- Private/Public Non-Profits, ie. Churches, Non-Profit Hospitals (38%)
- Private/Public For-Profits, i.e. For-Profit Hospitals (1%)
- Government Agencies (7%)
- Tribal Government or Consortium (7%)⁵

Children and Pregnant Women Served: 1,071,734 children and pregnant women were enrolled in HS and EHS programs during the 2007-2008 program year:

- 976,409 in HS and 95,325 in EHS²

Race:

- White (39%)
- Black or African American (29%)
- Unspecified Race (18%)
- Bi-Racial or Multi-Racial (7%)
- American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and Other (7%)³

Ethnicity:

- Hispanic or Latino Origin (36%)
- Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino Origin (64%)⁴

Estimated Average Cost Per Child in FY 2008:

- \$7,300 for HS and EHS
- \$7,100 for HS
- \$10,200 for EHS

Funding: Head Start and Early Head Start programs received approximately \$7.2 billion in regular appropriations during Fiscal Year 2009, and \$2.1 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding which can be spent in FYs 2009 and 2010.

Staff and Volunteers: There are 212,517 paid HS and EHS staff and 1,320,050 volunteers. Of those volunteers, 893,639 are former or current HS or EHS parents.⁶

Average Teacher Salaries:

- \$21,600 with a CDA or State Equivalent
- \$23,700 with an Associate Degree
- \$28,000 with a Baccalaureate Degree (Average Kindergarten Teacher Salary is \$48,874)⁷

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The National Head Start Association, an independent membership organization, advocates on behalf of the entire Head Start community and provides training and resources to Head Start programs nationwide.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). The 2009 HHS Poverty Guidelines.

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Head Start Program Information Report for the 2007-2008 Program Year, National Level Summary Report.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Head Start Program Information Report for the 2007-2008 Program Year; Average kindergarten teacher salary with baccalaureate degree. Available at http://swz.salary.com/salarywizard/layouthtmls/swzl_compresult_nationalED03000009.html#bottom on January 26, 2008.