



Subpart B

The Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Program



Program Governance

Standard Operating Procedures

*Aligned with the 2016 Head Start
Program Performance Standards
(Standards 1301.1 -1301.6)*

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INTRODUCTION

Community Services of Northeast Texas, Inc. (CSNT) Head Start program provides comprehensive and developmentally appropriate services for eligible 3 - 5 year old children in Bowie, Camp, Cass and Morris Counties.

The primary focus of the program is to assist children in becoming school ready. It is the goal of CSNT Head Start to provide the foundation for the development of self-sufficient, healthy, caring and productive children and families.

The most important ingredient for each child's success is the positive and active involvement of the family. Furthermore, education for children, families and staff, both formal and informal, will provide the opportunity for the growth and change needed to meet the goals of the families and of the program.

CSNT Head Start is committed to developing and maintaining an organizational environment that is supportive of the role of parents in the administration of the Head Start program. The Head Start Program also encourages and recognizes excellence in staff performance, and provides developmentally appropriate early childhood education services which consistently meets or exceeds Performance Requirements.

These Administrative Policies and Procedures will guide the day to day operations of the administrative portion of the Head Start program. Other tools used to guide the Head Start Program include the Content Area Policies and Procedures, the Finance Manual, the Program Plans, and the Personnel Policies and Procedures.

ORGANIZATION

PAST:

CSNT was incorporated as a private non-profit agency in 1965. The main objective was to offer vital services to underprivileged people in Northeast Texas. As the agency grew so did the services that were offered. Head Start became one of the services offered to families in Bowie, Camp, Cass, and Morris Counties in Northeast Texas. As a key component in President Lyndon B. Johnson's war on poverty, Head Start became a way for CSNT to join in the battle against poverty in local communities. The first CSNT Head Start was located in Atlanta, TX, as a summer school program for underprivileged children. A local elementary school teacher was one of the first Head Start Directors. After 30 years of teaching in the public school system, this person joined CSNT Head Start as an Education Specialist before retiring. Many employees have been past Head Start parents.

PRESENT:

CSNT Head Start is a critical part of the Community Services Action Agency. The Head Start Director reports to the CSNT Executive Director. One of the responsibilities of the CSNT Governing Board and the Head Start Policy Council are to establish the policies and procedures by which the program will operate. CSNT Governing Board has the additional responsibility for management and overall control of the entire organization. The Board assumes a legal responsibility for any and all programs authorized and operated by CSNT. The Governing Board is ultimately responsible for any adverse action taken against the Agency. Therefore the CSNT Governing Board shall have final authority over all program operations.

See Organizational Chart:

1. Community Services of Northeast Texas, Inc.

FUTURE:

Building solid relationships with parents and the community that will result in children that are school ready is the goal of all that we do. What we do today is only the beginning.

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE – (Standard 1301)

PURPOSE (Standard 1301.1)

An agency as defined in part 1305 of this chapter, must establish and maintain a formal structure for program governance that includes a governing body, a policy council at the agency level and policy committee at the delegate level and a parent committee. Governing bodies have a legal and fiscal responsibility to administer and oversee the agency’s Head Start and Early Head Start Programs. Policy councils are responsible for the direction of the agency’s Head Start and Early Head Start Programs.

PROCEDURE

CSNT has a formal structure for program governance that includes an agency governing board, a policy council, parent committees at each location, and management staff.

GOVERNING BODY (Standard 1301.2)

(a) Composition. The composition of a governing body must be in accordance with the requirements specified at section 642 (c)(1)(B) of the Act, except where specific exceptions are authorized in the case of public entities at section 642(c)(1)(D) of the Act. Agencies must ensure members of the governing body do not have conflict of interest, pursuant to section 642(c)(1)(C) of the Act.

PROCEDURE

1. All new members sign conflict of interest statements and confidentiality statements as part of their orientation to the board and/or policy council and all other members sign statements at least annually.
2. The Governing Body has at least one member who has a background in fiscal management or accounting.
3. The Governing Body has at least one member who has a background and expertise in early childhood education and development.
4. The Governing Body has at least one member that is a licensed attorney familiar with issues that come before the governing body.
5. If no board member is available to serve in the capacity listed above, the board uses a consultant, or other individual with relevant expertise and qualifications.
6. Additional members of the board represent the communities served and include parents of children who are currently, or were formerly,

enrolled in Head Start and are selected for their expertise in education, business administration, or community affairs.

(b) Duties and Responsibilities. (Standard 1301.2(b))

(1) The governing body is responsible for activities specified at section 642(c)(1)(E) of the Act.

(2) The governing body must use ongoing monitoring results, data on school readiness goals, other information described in 1302.102, and information described at section 642(d)(2) of the Act to conduct its responsibilities.

(c) Advisory Committees. (Standard 1301.2(c))

(1) A governing body may establish advisory committees as it deems necessary for effective governance and improvement of the program.

(2) If a governing body establishes an advisory committee to oversee key responsibilities related to program governance, it must:

(i) Establish the structure, communication, and oversight in such a way that the governing body continues to maintain its legal and fiscal responsibility for the Head Start agency; and,

(ii) Notify the responsible HHS official of its intent to establish such an advisory committee.

PROCEDURE

1. Governing body responsibilities include:

- a. Legal and fiscal responsibility for administering and overseeing the Head Start Program.
- b. Adopting practices that assure active, independent, and informed governance of the Head Start Program.
- c. Ensuring compliance with all local, State and Federal laws.
- d. Reviewing and approving the criteria for defining recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities (Selection Criteria).
- e. Reviewing and approving all funding applications and amendments, the implementation of all regulations and the implementation of a high-quality program.
- f. Establishing procedures and guidelines for assessing and collecting information.
- g. Reviewing and approving all major policies and procedures of the agency.

- h. Overseeing annual audits and self-assessment.
 - i. Reviewing and approving policies and procedures for caring out the programmatic and financial provisions in the grant application including implementing corrective action plans.
 - j. Reviewing and approving all Personnel Policies and Procedures including hiring, evaluation, termination, and compensating agency employees.
 - k. Reviewing and approving the composition of the policy council and the procedures on how they are chosen.
 - l. Reviewing and approving internal controls for the safeguarding of federal funds.
 - m. Reviewing and approving the operating budget for the Agency.
 - n. Selecting the independent auditor for the Agency and reviewing all audits.
 - o. Reviewing all Office of Head Start monitoring results and information, when appropriate.
 - p. Approving personnel policies and procedures including hiring, evaluation, compensation and termination of the Executive Director, Head Start Director, Human Resources Director, Finance Director and all persons in equivalent positions.
 - a. Reviewing and approving standards of conduct for the Agency including conflicts of interest and complaints against the Program and/or Agency.
 - (i) All community complaints are documented using the CSNT Documentation Complaint Form.
 - (ii) All community complaints are made to the Program Manager or the Executive Director's Assistant.
 - (iii) All complaints are referred immediately to the Supervisor of the location involved in the complaint.
 - (iv) The Program Director is notified of the complaint.
 - (v) All complaints that may affect the Head Start Program are discussed with the Governing Bodies including the Governing Board.
 - q. Reviewing and approving strategic plans that include goals for the five-year Head Start Grant.
 - r. Reviewing and approving the NFS (In-Kind) reimbursement rates.
 - s. Reviewing and approving procedures on shared decision-making with the Policy Council.
2. The governing body determines which advisory committees it will establish per the Governing Body By-laws. Each advisory committee communicates back to the governing body any decisions that it recommends. At that time, the governing body places the item on the

agenda for discussion and/or approval. (See Governing Body By-Laws).

POLICY COUNCIL AND POLICY COMMITTEES (Standard 1301.3)

(a) Establishing policy councils and policy committees. Each agency must establish and maintain a policy council responsible for the direction of the Head Start Program at the agency level, and a policy committee at the delegate level. If an agency delegates operational responsibility for the entire Head Start Program to one delegate agency, the policy council and policy committee may be the same body.

PROCEDURE

1. The Governing Board of the agency establishes the Head Start Policy Council and approves the Policy Council by-laws annually.

(b) Composition. (Standard 1301.3(b))

(1) A program must establish a policy council in accordance with section 642(c)(2)(B) of the Act, or a policy committee at the delegate level in accordance with section 642(c)(3) of the Act, as early in the program year as possible. Parents of children currently enrolled in each program option must be proportionately represented on the policy council and on the policy committee at the delegate level.

(2) The program must ensure members of the Policy Council and the Policy Committee at the delegate level, do not have a conflict of interest pursuant to sections 642(c)(2)(C) and 642(c)(3)(B) of the Act. Staff may not serve on the policy council or policy committee at the delegate level except parents who occasionally substitute as staff.

PROCEDURE

1. The Head Start Policy Council is established at the beginning of each school year (normally September). Parents at each Campus nominate and elect the parent of a currently enrolled child from their Campus to serve as their policy council member. CNST Head Start Policy Council is made up of (9) policy council seats and up to (4) community members. The community members are from one of the four counties within the Head Start service area.
2. All Policy Council members sign a confidentiality state and a conflict of interest statement during the orientation process. All new members

will sign these statements as they are seated members and go through new policy council member orientation.

(c) Duties and responsibilities. (Standard 1301.3(c))

(1) A policy council is responsible for activities specified at section 642 (c)(2)(D) of the Act. A policy committee must approve and submit to the delegate its decisions in each of the following referenced section 642(c)(2)(D)(i) through (vii) of the Act.

(2) A policy council and a policy committee at the delegate level, must use ongoing monitoring results, data on school readiness goals, other information described in 1302.102 and information described in section 642(d)(2) of the Act to conduct its responsibilities.

PROCEDURE

2. Policy Council responsibilities include:
 - a. Reviewing and approving policies and procedures that ensure active involvement of parents in the program.
 - b. Reviewing and approving the criteria for defining recruitment, selection and enrollment priorities (Selection Criteria).
 - c. Reviewing and approving applications and amendments, the implementation of all regulations and the implementation of a high-quality program.
 - d. Reviewing and approving Head Start budgets including policies and procedures for reimbursements for Policy Council activities.
 - e. Reviewing and approving Policy Council By-Laws.
 - f. Reviewing and approving personnel policies and procedures including standards of conduct for program staff, contractors, and volunteers and criteria for employment and dismissal of program staff.
 - g. Reviewing and approving how Policy Council Members are elected.
 - h. Reviewing and approving procedures for shared-decision making with the Governing Body.
 - i. Reviewing and approving procedures for program planning.
 - j. Reviewing and approving strategic plans that include long and short range plans.
 - k. Reviewing and approving the policies and procedures for hiring and terminating the Head Start Director and other employees that work for the Head Start Program.
 - (i) The HR Director submits to the Policy Council on a monthly basis during Executive Session employees

slated for new hire, transfer, or termination. (See Personnel Policies and Procedures for more information.)

- l. Reviewing and approving policies and procedures for hiring and terminating all personnel who work primarily for Head Start.
- m. Serving as the link between the council and the Parent Committee.
- n. Assisting with recruiting volunteers to work in the program.
- o. Use on-going monitoring results, data on school readiness goals, and other information to conduct responsibilities.
- p. Reviewing and approving procedures for resolving community complaints.
 - (j) All community complaints are documented using the CSNT Documentation Complaint Form.
 - (ii) All community complaints are made to the Program Manager or the Executive Director's Assistant.
 - (iii) All complaints are referred immediately to the Supervisor of the location involved in the complaint.
 - (iv) The Program Director is notified of the complaint.
 - (v)** All complaints that may affect the Head Start Program are discussed with the Governing Bodies

(d) Term. (Standard 1301.3(d))

- (1) A member will serve for one year.**
- (2) If the member intends to serve for another year, s/he must stand for re-election.**
- (3) The policy council and policy committee at the delegate level must include in its by-laws how many one-year terms, not to exceed five terms, a person may serve.**
- (4) A program must seat a successor policy council, or policy committee at the delegate level, may be dissolved.**

PROCEDURE

- 1. Policy council members can serve **five** (1) year terms.
- 2. Are elected for each (1) year term.
- 3. The Policy Council By-laws state the term limits for members (See Policy Council By-Laws).
- 4. Each successor to Policy Council is seated prior to the existing membership being dissolved.

(e) Reimbursement. (Standard 1301.3(e)) A program must enable low-income members to participate fully in their policy council or policy committee responsibilities by providing, if necessary, reimbursements for reasonable expenses incurred by the low-come members.

PROCEDURE

1. Policy Council Members are eligible for reimbursement travel expenses incurred to complete their duties serving on the Policy Council.
2. Child Care is provided during Policy Council Meetings for parents in need of care in order to participate in the Meetings.
3. See the Parent Handbook for more detailed instructions on parent reimbursement and child care.

PARENT COMMITTEES (Standard 1301.4)

(a) Establishing a parent committee. A program must establish a parent committee comprised exclusively of parents of currently enrolled children as early in the program year as possible. This committee must be established at the center level for center-based programs and at the local program level for other program options. When a program operates more than one option, parents may choose to have a separate committee for each option or combine membership. A program must ensure that parents of currently enrolled children understand the process for elections to the policy council or policy committee and other leadership opportunities.

PROCEDURE

1. Campus level parent committees are established from parents of currently enrolled children at the beginning of each school year.
2. Parents nominate and elect officers and Policy Council Representatives and Alternates during the first parent committee meeting (normally September).
3. Management staff assist parents with the election process and make sure that they understand their roles and responsibilities, if they choose to be nominated for a position on the Policy Council or the Parent Committee.
4. Parent Committee meetings are held once monthly on the date selected and voted on by the Parent Committee.

(b) Requirements of parent committees. Within the parent committee structure, a program may determine the best method to engage families using strategies that are most effective in their community, as

long as the program ensures the parent committee carries out the following minimum responsibilities:

- (1) Advise staff in developing and implementing local program policies, activities, and services to ensure they meet the needs of children and families;**
- (2) Have a process for communication with the policy council and policy committee; and**
- (3) Within the guidelines established by the governing body, policy council or policy committee, participate in the recruitment and screening of Early Head Start and Head Start employees.**

PROCEDURE

1. Parent Committees advise staff in developing and implementing activities and services at the Campus level.
2. Parent Committees have their Policy Council Representative communicate with them concerning issues discussed during the Policy Council Meeting as an item listed on the Agenda.
3. Parent Committees assist in recruitment of staff by notifying people within the community of staff openings at the Campus level as determined by the Governing Body. Notices of open positions are posted at the Campus level.
4. Funds are available in the Head Start budget for parents to participate in activities that help them reach their goals and assist the program with management type activities. (i.e., serve on policy council, participate in self-assessment, serve on program committees, etc.) All Federal funds will be expended per the CSNT Financial Policies and Procedures and all applicable State and Federal Regulations.

TRAINING (Standard 1301.5)

An agency must provide appropriate training and technical assistance to the governing body, any advisory committee members, and the policy council, including training on the program performance standards and training indicated in 1302.12(m) to ensure members understand the information they receive and can effectively oversee and participate in the programs in the Head Start agency.

PROCEDURE

1. The Governing Body receives appropriate training and technical assistance and/or orientation to the Governing Body, Policy Council, and/or other advisory committees.

2. Training focuses on the Performance Standards, the Governing Body roles and responsibilities, and the Head Start program eligibility process.
3. Governing Body members receive on-going training that assists them in effectively understanding the information that they receive when making decisions about the Head Start Program.

IMPASSE PROCEDURES (Standard 1301.6)

(a) To facilitate meaningful consultation and collaboration about decisions of the governing body and policy council, each agency's governing body and policy council jointly must establish written procedures for resolving internal dispute between the governing board and policy council in a timely manner that include impasse procedures. These procedures must:

(4) Demonstrate that the governing body considers proposed decisions from the policy council and that the policy council considers proposed decisions from the governing body;

(5) If there is a disagreement, require the governing body and the policy council to notify the other in writing why it does not accept a decision; and,

(6) Describe a decision-making process and a timeline to resolve disputes and reach decisions that are not arbitrary, capricious, or illegal.

(b) If the agency's decision-making process does not result in a resolution and an impasse continues, the governing body and policy council must select a mutually agreeable third party mediator and participate in a formal process of mediation that leads to a resolution of the dispute.

(c) For all programs except American Indian and Alaska Native programs, if no resolution is reached with a mediator, the governing body and policy council must select a mutually agreeable arbitrator whose decision is final.

PROCEDURE

1. The Governing Body and Policy Council have agreed upon written dispute/Impasse procedures that meet all of the procedures listed in Performance Standard 1301.6. (See dispute/impasse procedures found in the Governing Board By-laws and the Policy Council By-laws.)