

Amendment to Year Two of Five Year Grant Adams County Head Start

An in-depth data analysis of several sources including parent input, community needs assessments, internal and external surveys, aggregated program data, and community input prompted the need to request approval for program changes as Head Start eligible families have demonstrated an ongoing demand for full day services. The need increased every year. ACHS has developed a plan that will address family and community needs while also ensuring long term program sustainability.

ACHS began the transition to implement additional full day classrooms in the 2015-2016 program year; however, the program is still not meeting the demand for full day services. As a result, ACHS is requesting an amendment to year two of its five year grant cycle proposing having only a full day option, a reduction of slots, and the elimination of double sessions (see Table 1). These changes support the need of Head Start eligible families in the communities we serve and align with the new Head Start Performance Standards (NHSPS).

Table 1

	Number of Head Start Slots	Number of Full Day Slots	Number of Double Session Slots	Number of Eliminated Slots
Current	449	64	385	N/A
Proposed	256	256	0	193

Program and Community Data

During the 2015 – 2016 and 2016 – 2017 program years, ACHS experienced a challenge in maintaining full enrollment in the double session option throughout each school year. Monthly enrollment reports submitted to the Office of Head Start reflect repeated instances when the program was unable to fill slots within the 30 day deadline for both program years. School districts in Adams County have experienced similar challenges with enrollment for their part day option. However, the school districts' and ACHS's full day slots are in high demand. Additionally, data collected from a recent parent survey conducted by the local Early Childhood

Council reflects the need for full day services in the Adams County community. ACHS also administered a parent survey in February of 2016 to determine the program option needs of families. Out of 498 families, 346 completed the survey. The results indicate that 83% of these families are in need of full day services. Furthermore, the program's community needs assessment supports the need for the full day option; please refer to the *Community Needs Assessment* section of Adams County Head Start's year one of five grant application for details.

Aligned outcomes from ACHS and community partners correlate with families seeking full day center based slots more frequently than home based or double session. Adams County communities have faced significant changes in the past five years, including an economic recession. The declining interest in home based and double sessions and a high demand for full day services could potentially stem from parents' employment/ training opportunities as the nation's economic health gradually improves.

In order to meet the needs of Head Start eligible families, align with the full day requirement, and transition toward the 1020 duration; ACHS proposes the implementation of only full day sessions. The program will offer four full day classes Monday through Friday that meet the 1020 requirement. The remaining 12 full day classes will operate four days a week. These classes will have 128 instruction days starting the 2017 – 2018 program year (August of 2017). This requires the transition of 12 double session classrooms to full day, thus eliminating 193 double session slots from the program.

If the proposal is approved, ACHS will no longer offer double sessions. The program strives to help families identify the best preschool option/center. If we do not offer the option that best meets the needs of the family, ACHS provides information and support in contacting organizations that offer these services.

COST ANALYSIS

Affordable preschool services are in demand; unfortunately many families in our communities do not have the means to cover the cost of high quality services. Having additional full day classrooms available through ACHS will support families' needs for this option. The average cost of attending a full day, high quality preschool in the community exceeds the financial abilities of Head Start eligible families.

ACHS lacks the necessary funding to support the conversion of all current double sessions to full day classrooms, implement the 1020 duration in all classrooms, and the ability to fiscally sustain the changes long term. The program cannot offer the 1020 hour option in all classrooms due to the anticipated salary increase needed to extend work hours for staff, such as Classroom Aides, that currently do not work on Fridays. Furthermore, to sustain the 1020 requirement in the 12 classrooms, the program would need to hire additional credentialed staff to provide the necessary classroom coverage for teachers to fulfill non-classroom responsibilities.

In addition, securing facilities continues to be a challenge for the program. ACHS does not have the facilities to house more classrooms, thus prompting the decrease of program slots. In order to provide additional full day slots, meet the needs of Head Start eligible families, and fiscally sustain the program option changes long term, ACHS must eliminate 193 double session slots. If the proposal is approved, the program has the fiscal capacity to serve 256 slots. Sixty four slots in four full day classrooms will meet the 1020 duration starting the 2017-2018 school year. The remaining 192 slots will receive 128 days of instruction and as funding permits more slots will transition into the 1020 duration (see *Table 2*).

Table 2

Proposed Changes Starting Year 3 of Year 5 of Grant				
Classrooms	1020 Hrs. per School Year	128 Days per School Year	Five Days a Week	Four Days a Week
4	X		X	
12		X		X

All funding currently received from the Office of Head Start will be utilized to sustain the 256 full day slots. Even though enrollment numbers will drop from 449 to 256, the number of classrooms and staff required to provide services remain the same (see Table 3). Unfortunately, a decrease in funding from other sources, such as the Colorado Preschool Program funding (CPP), is expected. ACHS anticipates the loss of CPP funding as a result of transitioning to all full day sessions. CPP regulations prohibit the use of funds unless the preschool program adds two hours, thus extending the service hours from 6.5 to 8.5 hours a day and ACHS lacks the funding to sustain this option, even with CPP funds.

Table 3

Staff Needs				
	Number of Program Slots	Number of Classrooms	Number of Education Staff	Option
Current	449	16	43	4 Full Day, 12 Double Session
Proposed	256	16	43	16 Full Day

The program is anticipating additional costs to support the provision of IEP services for enrolled children. ACHS's collaboration with the school districts for these services will be impacted since five out of the six school districts do not provide remote services outside of their schools. The program's shift to all full day will eradicate the dually-enrolled option families currently have. If ACHS has to provide the special education services currently offered by school districts, the program will have to secure a special education services contract. There is a possibility that ACHS will need to seek other funding sources to maintain and enhance the quality of these services.

Summary

Outcomes delineated the need for full day services and reflect that the double session option is not meeting the needs of the community. The cost analysis for the implementation of all full day sessions emphasizes ACHS's inability to fund any additional classrooms, thus, recognizing the need to reduce slots to ensure program sustainability.

ACHS has discussed the proposed changes with Policy Council (PC) and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Our governing boards are aware of Head Start eligible families' needs, the elimination of program slots for fiscal sustainability, the implementation of full day only sessions, and the need to move toward the 1020 duration mandate. Both PC and BOCC have approved the proposed changes.

ACHS's commitment to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children and families in the community is evident as we strive to implement the program options most needed by the families within the program's funding capacity.