

Considering Conversion

The Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 provided Head Start grantees the opportunity to convert preschool Head Start slots into Early Head Start slots based on local community needs and capacity. In addition, recompetition also offers programs a chance to request additional program changes such as moving slots from one area to another, converting slots from Head Start to Early Head Start, and closing or relocating centers. This Tip Sheet provides information on some of the things programs may want to consider as they explore the possibility of making program changes.

Factors to Consider in Converting Slots

The decision to convert slots from Head Start to Early Head Start is driven by the context in which you provide services and the unique challenges facing your program. The points below offer insight on factors and questions to consider in decision-making.

- Are you experiencing enrollment issues? If so, why? Is it because of an expansion of state prek services or is your area over-served in regard to pre-k services?
- Did your state receive a Prek Development/Expansion Grant? If so, what will the impact of this project be on your program in the next few years?
- Should you consider changing the days of service/hours of operation to become more competitive rather than converting slots?
- It is more expensive to serve infants and toddlers. For this reason, you will not be able to serve the same number of children should you decide to convert slots from Head Start to Early Head Start. What would your enrollment reduction be to free up sufficient funding to serve infants and toddlers?

Tips for Planning Program Changes

When planning program changes it is important to implement a decision making process that considers the costs and program impacts of a particular decision from the fiscal, operational, and organizational perspective. The points below provide additional guidance to get you started:

- Begin the project by looking at your budget and propose enrollment reductions in groups of 17-20 children. Based on the amount of funds you free-up by reducing HS slots, determine how many EHS children you can serve.

No new funds are available for conversion, but you can spend your existing funds differently to meet your goals.

Grant Proposal Elements Impacted by Program Changes

- You will need to describe the rationale for program changes in Section 1 of your proposal.
- Include a start-up timetable in your grant appendix
- Update your organizational chart to include new program options, staff positions and services.
- Write a detailed start-up budget and budget narrative that is no more than 4 pages long.
- Include job descriptions for new vacant staff positions in your grant Appendix.

- Link your plans to community needs. This will need to be demonstrated in your proposal.
- Use the recompetition start-up fund request to modify facilities and begin assessing needs now.
- Make sure you are familiar with the requirements of Early Head Start in regard to days/weeks of service and services that must be provided.
- Staffing will be your greatest expense. Create an organizational structure within the context of your project budgeting by considering your staffing needs and examine if it is possible to move existing staff into EHS.



Heartland Solutions offers a variety of options that are appropriate for all types of programs seeking Head Start grant funding and full post-award start-up consulting. Visit our website at www.heartlandgrants.org or call Andrea Molarius at 530-526-9161 for additional recompetition resources and to learn about our services.