

Examples:

AWARDS NOMINATION SUBMISSIONS



COMPLETING THE NOMINATION FORM: Common Mistakes

Celebrating Head Start Heroes

Administrator of the Year Award

Be sure to complete the form below in its entirety.
All fields are required. Please type or print clearly.

Please mark the year of application: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2024: Grantee Executive Director <input type="checkbox"/> 2025: Center Director - Head Start or Early Head Start <input type="checkbox"/> 2026: Assistant or Deputy Director - Head Start or Early Head Start	For Administrative Use Only: <input type="checkbox"/> Local Program Director <i>initial here before submitting to the state association.</i>
	<input type="checkbox"/> State Association President <i>initial here before submitting to RIVHSA</i>

Be sure the correct year is selected

Include local program director's initials

Nominee

Nominee	Lucy Lewis		Social Security #		Date	6/15/2023
Position Title	Executive Director					
Agency Hire Date	1990	Hire Date in Current Position	2003			
State	FL	Program Member #	8925	Individual Member #		
Mailing Address of Nominee	111 N. Gadsden Street, Suite 200					
City	Tallahassee	State	FL	Zip Code	32301	
Telephone	850.694.6477			E-Mail	LL@welovekids.org	

Do NOT include a social security number on this form

RIVHSA Member Number

Head Start/Early Head Start Director

Name	Benjamin Sawgrass		
Telephone	850.693.6577	Fax	850.231.8990
E-mail	benjamin@welovekids.org		

Nominating Grantee (Use agency information not the local center. Indicate the formal grantee name; no abbreviations)

Name	We Love Kids		
Grantee Mailing Address	111 N. Gadsden Street, Suite 200		
City	Tallahassee	State	FL
Zip Code	32301		
Telephone	850.694.6477	Fax	850.231.8990

Submission Checklist: Check each box to indicate that required materials are attached.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application Form
<input type="checkbox"/> Proof of highest post-secondary degree completed (e.g. copy of degree or transcript)
<input type="checkbox"/> Letters of reference | Statements:
<input type="checkbox"/> Length or Service in the Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Training, Qualifications, and Credentials
<input type="checkbox"/> Mobilization of Resources and Collaboration
<input type="checkbox"/> Quality and Provision of Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Contributions |
|---|---|

Application Process: Nominations will be processed by phase as indicated below.

- **NOMINEE:** Submit all items listed above to your local Head Start/Early Head Start grantee
- **GRANTEE:** Submit local recipients to your state association. Contact your state association for filing deadline.
- **STATE ASSOCIATION:** Submit state recipients to RIVHSA by the **July 15** filing deadline.

Verify all checklist items are included in the submission

STRONG QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMISSION

Administrator of the Year Award

1. Length/Service in the Program; year started; positions held

██████████ is truly a servant leader – a person who puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible. Her career has been guided by her personal faith and commitment to serving others and she has certainly found her calling in leading and expanding ██████████. During her tenure, we have grown from a small, local childcare provider to a national leader and recognized innovator in early childhood education, with revenues now exceeding \$98M.

This growth could only be accomplished with a leader who has built a corporate culture of building the best in people. ██████████ believes that an organization is strong when each person brings their unique skills and talents with a goal of making the “whole” bigger than the sum of the individual parts.

██████████ began her career at ██████████ in 1990 as the ██████████. At that time, the organization was providing community-based childcare in Northeast Florida with local funding. ██████████ quickly realized the limitations of local funding as we could not sustain a business model that would allow us to serve those most in need.

Through her expertise and leadership, ██████████ successfully competed for our first Head Start grant and began the program in 1996 with an enrollment of ██████████ slots. In her role as ██████████, she was responsible for developing the Accounting, Financial Management, and Procurement as well as strong internal standards and policies and procedures to ensure compliance with all federal guidelines – not an easy task for an organization embarking on their first federal contract!

██████████ skills were crucial for the organization to grow, and she took on the roles of ██████████ before taking on the role of ██████████.

As ██████████ continued her work to continually improve the quality of our program services, she knew that the needs of children and families in our state required us to expand our operations into new geographies. In ██████████, ██████████ was awarded two competitive grants – ██████████. Not only did this growth require the organization to quadruple the number of children and families served, but the expansion also required us to serve ██████████ additional counties and bring on ██████████ new staff members.

██████████ passion for our mission continued to fuel our growth. Once we had fully implemented the two new grants, she ensured that we successfully competed for two more grants – ██████████ with ██████████ enrollment slots and ██████████ Head Start with ██████████ enrollment slots.

██████████ always credits her team for the amazing growth and outcomes, but her passion for our mission and her commitment to our children and families drives each team member to give their best efforts.

2. Training, Qualifications, and Credentials

██████████ is passionate about professional development and training for each member of our amazing team as well as for our Childcare Partners. She believes firmly that this focus is needed to continually raise the quality of early education throughout our community.

She has worked to set an example through her own education, earning her associate degree from ██████████ at ██████████, bachelor's degree in business administration from ██████████, and Master of Public Administration from the ██████████. She has completed 3 years of work towards her Doctor of Education from the ██████████ and looks forward to completing that goal.

Her extensive engagement in professional organizations continues to expand her knowledge and expertise, with membership and involvement in:

- The Society for Nonprofit Organizations
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- The National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES)
- Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA)
- Florida Children's Forum
- National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)
- Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce
- The National Head Start Association
- Leadership Jacksonville, Class of 2006
- Women In Local Leadership (WILL)
- Women's Giving Alliance

A great example of how ██████████ values professional development is her commitment to the professional development of our parents. Head Start ensures that we embrace professional development for our staff and ██████████ extends this approach through her commitment to the well-being of our families. She ensures that our staff encourage parents to pursue their own education to increase employability. She goes further by giving consideration for current or former Head Start parents and alumni to become employed by our organization. The result is that over 20% our Head Start/Early Head Start program staff are current or former Head Start parents or students, which demonstrates how effective and innovative leadership results in life-changing differences for the children and families we serve.

3. Mobilization of Resources and Collaboration to provide and enhance services to children and their families

██████████ leadership has led to the creation of partnerships and collaborations throughout our ██████████ service area that are simply

This nomination provides clear, detailed information about the nominee's experience, qualifications, and impact on their program while staying within the word limits and avoiding unnecessary language. It also includes specific examples of the nominee's work, helping reviewers understand their contributions and overall impact on their program and community

STRONG QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMISSION

too lengthy to list, so we will showcase a few examples to show the depth and breadth of [REDACTED] ability to work with the community to bring about impactful change.

One of our longest partnerships is with the [REDACTED], which began in 1999, just a few years after beginning our Head Start program. We needed knowledgeable and trained volunteers to support our classroom and comprehensive services. Together, with [REDACTED], professor at [REDACTED], we created an internship model that would yield significant learning and experience for her students while also creating significant benefit to our Head Start/Early Head Start children.

We have now completed over 40 semesters of this internship program, where psychology and social work students experience three service rotations – Education, where they work with teachers to learn how to create individualized learning experiences and model supportive learning practices; Health/Mental Health, where they ensure effective service delivery and work with children on strategies to support their development and needs; and Family Services, where they support parent involvement by helping with goal setting as well as participating with community partners to build their understanding of the community's system of care.

This partnership has resulted in hundreds of students pursuing rewarding careers in service to those in need, with 19 of these students becoming [REDACTED] Services employees. In addition, this partnership has amassed more than [REDACTED] in non-federal match through the students' volunteer services.

Another example of an effective collaboration is with [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] knew that many of our parents were struggling to obtain well-child checks and immunizations despite their best efforts. She challenged her team to work to develop a community partnership to address this need. We wanted to ensure this work would support a significant number of families, so we determined that our [REDACTED] centers that are co-located on the same site, could create great impact as they serve over [REDACTED] children. Together, we worked with [REDACTED] to create a portable health clinic staffed with a doctor trained in Pediatric Medicine supported by a medical assistant. Health services would be available year-round, with no charge to any Head Start/Early Head Start family without insurance.

4. Quality and Provision of Services; activities in program that are unique and meet or surpass the HSPSS

[REDACTED] has an unwavering commitment to quality. Not only are quality metrics embedded in every aspect of our program operations, but our quality is also noted throughout our Federal Reviews, with multiple compliments on the consistency and quality given by the review teams. Achieving this consistent quality when a program is experiencing substantial growth is significantly more challenging than when an organization remains at status quo, yet [REDACTED] leadership and management skills results in continuous improvement in our quality results.

[REDACTED] saw how challenging behaviors and mental health struggles were increasingly seen in our early childhood classrooms and knew she needed to equip our team to support children and families with these challenges. She was alarmed because data shows that our communities were trying to cope with childcare when young children are being expelled from non-Head Start/Early Head Start preschools and childcare programs at astonishing rates because of challenging behaviors, with preschool expulsions three times more common than K-12 and childcare expulsions 13 times more common than K-12. [REDACTED] looked to see how other industries were addressing this issue and learned how the health care system utilized Trauma-Informed Care, resulting in systems of care that better support patients and improve health outcomes. [REDACTED] noted that the success in the health care field has led to application of this foundational work to other fields and sought to use this learning to better equip our agency to adapt to the challenges of trauma.

[REDACTED] began with education for the agency leadership so that they understood the mental health effects of Adverse Childhood Events (ACE's), factors and practices to build resiliency in children and families, strategies to address challenging behaviors resulting from trauma, and self-care approaches to address compassion fatigue and secondary stress. As the team continued to learn, [REDACTED] was convinced that we needed to go deeper. As a result, [REDACTED] is undertaking an [REDACTED]

When COVID occurred, our early adoption of [REDACTED] was instrumental in our response. We knew that mental health would be of concern as shelter-in-place protocols were implemented. [REDACTED] worked diligently to ensure that we were addressing both the needs of our families and children as well as the needs of our staff. Our team proactively reached out to every family to let them know we had mental health and social-emotional resources available. [REDACTED] supported our teams as they created virtual yoga and wellness sessions to support staff. We knew our families were struggling financially, so we held virtual diaper drives to distribute diapers and other needed supplies to families.

5. Special Contributions

One of [REDACTED] great strengths is her ability to create long-term change. Rather than just respond to an issue or crisis, [REDACTED] thinks strategically about how to equip the agency to continue to build strength and competency.

A good example of this quality can be seen in our post-pandemic actions. As we emerged from the pandemic, [REDACTED] realized the substantive benefits that we had gained from implementing an intentional approach to staff well-being and she knows the importance of self-care for caregivers. Through her leadership, we have been able to create a permanent Staff Wellness Specialist position, who is responsible for executing wellness strategies and tools that support mental health and emotional wellness of staff. This position will be utilized as we continue to create trauma-informed departmental environments, integrate resilience focused practices, establish internal and external support systems, and reduce stigma for accessing mental health services.

This nomination provides clear, detailed information about the nominee's experience, qualifications, and impact on their program while staying within the word limits and avoiding unnecessary language. It also includes specific examples of the nominee's work, helping reviewers understand their contributions and overall impact on their program and community

NOT-SO-STRONG QUESTIONNAIRE SUBMISSION

- ██████████
1. (10 points) Length of Service in the Program: What year did you start? What positions have you held?
 - a. ██████████ has been with ██████████ since 2003, starting as a Site Supervisor. ██████████ initially began with Head Start in 1990 as parent where both of her children attended the Head Start program. ██████████ has been a policy council member, teacher aide, lead teacher, and later to become a Site Supervisor.
 2. (15 points) Training, Qualifications, and Credentials: At what level did you begin? What training appropriate to your position have you acquired? What credentials do you possess?
 - a. While in the Head Start program as a ██████████ received ██████████ hours, later to get her associates, and to get her ██████████ ██████████ has acquired her ██████████ credentials maintained every two years, and keeping current with all required trainings for compliance with ██████████
 3. (15 points) Mobilization of Resources and Collaboration: List activities or projects in which you are (or have been) involved that demonstrate your ability to mobilize necessary resources to provide and enhance services to children and their families. Please include the size of your program.
 - a. ██████████ composed of Coordinators, Site Supervisors, and Senior Staff to help promote growth
 - b. ██████████ oversees ██████████ head start classrooms with ██████████
 - c. ██████████ is our ██████████, where she has helped train new site superiors who has entered the agency
 - d. ██████████ children in both Head start and Early Head Start
 - e. Assisted in opening over ██████████ classrooms throughout her time in the agency
 4. (20 points) Quality and Provision of Services: Describe activities in your program or community that are unique and meet or surpass the Head Start Program Performance Standards.
 - a. ██████████ is unique in nature due to we are under the program that offers School Readiness and has the food program in one inclusive building. Having these services in our agency allows our Head start program to help connect families to more services and benefits within this community. ██████████ assessments which helps further the process for children who may need an IFSP or IEP. We have partnered with our local Public schools who comes to the school to conduct ██████████ for the children in Seminole county. We conduct two home visits and classroom conferences per year with our families, aligning to each conference as a checkpoint for the family and the children to discuss their school readiness.
 5. (30 points) Special Contributions: Describe in 500 words or less (no more than two typewritten, double spaced pages) any special contributions you have made to the program that have had a positive impact on services on the total program. Please be very specific.
 - a. ██████████ has made major contributions to the agency as a ██████████ by maintaining DCF compliance and having the highest non-compliances in the agency. ██████████ provides meaningful coaching to ██████████ staff and helps train newer supervisors in the policies and procedures of Head Start. The most current contribution ██████████ has made is coaching one of her previous teachers ██████████, in her journey in the agency to become an Education Specialist. During ██████████ journey, ██████████ supported ██████████ by continuously encouraging her to get her BA, once ██████████ received her BA, ██████████ advocated for her ██████████ ██████████ has been promoted from a teacher assistant, to a lead teacher, and now an education specialist. ██████████ has established partnerships with the local public school n principals in ██████████ Counties. ██████████ has overseen more than ██████████ teachers while working with ██████████ has started in the program as parent with two children who also graduated the Head Start program to go into primary school. ██████████ was approached worked in the classroom as a volunteer, to later get her CDA, Associates, and finally Bachelor's degree. ██████████ has been given awards in the agency for her ability to lead and consistent compliance with DCF in all her classrooms.

This nomination shared a basic overview of the nominee's qualifications, but it did not include enough detail to fully show their impact or what makes them stand out. The response was very brief, which made it difficult for reviewers to get a clear sense of the nominee's contributions. Adding specific examples and a bit more context would help create a stronger and more complete picture.

STRONG LETTERS OF REFERENCE



Changing Health Care for Good.*

June 9, 2023

To the Selection Committee for Head Start Heroes

I am so pleased to write this letter recommending that [REDACTED] be honored as Administrator of the Year. I have served on the Board of Trustees for [REDACTED] for the past 6 years, currently [REDACTED]. One of the great benefits of being [REDACTED] is that I get to work closely with [REDACTED] and see first-hand the impact of her leadership.

I was drawn to the work of [REDACTED] because of the depth and breadth of services as well as the commitment to all aspects of child development so that children grow intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially. My professional career is serving as the [REDACTED], where advocating for children is the most important part of our mission. [REDACTED] Hospital is part of the Baptist Health system where our healing ministry focuses on the whole person – physically, mentally, and spiritually and I love that my volunteer service with [REDACTED] aligns with my professional work.

[REDACTED] is dedicated to providing excellence in early childhood education, with a passion for serving those most in need. [REDACTED] ability to bring her superb management experience and robust financial skills to grow and sustain this organization is beyond commendable. [REDACTED] has a wonderful capacity to always see the “big picture” while addressing the immediate concerns of the agency, resulting in decisions and strategies that have guided us forward to success.

[REDACTED] embraces innovation as she knows the organization must be continually learning to be able to support the needs of our community’s most vulnerable young children. [REDACTED] has a clear understanding of how to lead her agency in supporting children in a way that will meet their needs and impact them positively throughout their lives.

As I reflect on [REDACTED] and her many accomplishments as [REDACTED], I can see her heart and her faith throughout her work. She lives to serve others and has made a difference in the lives of so many – the children we serve, our parents, our staff, our community partners, and our Board. Every Board Meeting, we all leave inspired by this amazing work and become even more committed to the future of the organization. This is a result of [REDACTED] leadership, and we hope you will honor all that she had accomplished.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Operations and System
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



June 15, 2023

Nomination Committee –

I am honored to nominate [REDACTED]. I have had the pleasure of working with [REDACTED] for many years and know how deserving she is of this recognition.

I had the privilege of serving as [REDACTED]

During my administration, enhancing Early Literacy was a primary focus. To support the efforts, we created an Early Literacy Partnership Policy Council and was delighted when [REDACTED] joined the Council. Her insight, expertise, and leadership helped us launch multiple initiatives. [REDACTED] embraced using evidence-based work and helped lead the group in collaborative decision making.

As we delved deeper into the issues facing our community, it became apparent that we had to take dramatic steps to stem and reverse the tide of violent crime that was threatening our city’s future. I committed our city to prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation through the Jacksonville Journey. I knew that Early Childhood Literacy was critical to these efforts and asked [REDACTED] to chair a committee focused in that area. [REDACTED] leadership of this committee once again demonstrated [REDACTED] abilities as a skilled administrator.

After leaving office, I had the honor of nominating [REDACTED] for the nonprofit sector. [REDACTED] accomplishments were so significant – growing the organization’s budget by 317 percent, enabling [REDACTED] to serve thousands more children, her commitment to cutting-edge early education delivered during children’s most formative years, and her commitment and service to her community.

We are all blessed that [REDACTED] has dedicated [REDACTED] career and her life to ensuring that every child in our region enters school ready to learn, succeed, and become a contributing member of the community. Through [REDACTED] work at [REDACTED] and as a partner and volunteer with others, her influence will be felt for decades to come.

I am grateful for your consideration of our nomination of [REDACTED] for this honor.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Working Collaboratively
for Children's Health



These letters of recommendation demonstrate a strong familiarity with the nominee, highlighting specific achievements and character traits rather than offering general or vague praise.