

# Full Enrollment Initiative



May 18, 2023



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
Office of Head Start

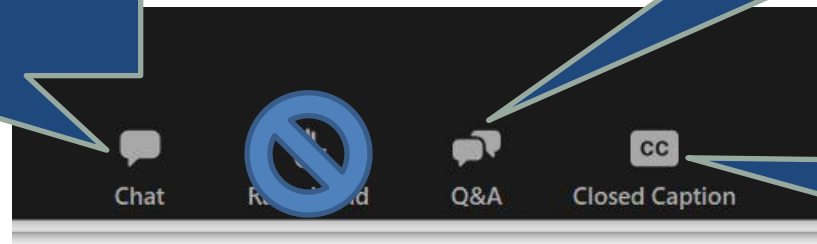


# Housekeeping Items

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- All participants are in listen-only mode.
- Certificates of Attendance will be provided via chat and email.
- Closed Captioning is optional.
- Participate in discussion via chat.
- Submit all questions via Q&A.

Participate in discussion with the presenters here.



Ask your questions here.

Closed Captions can be turned on or off here.

# Full Enrollment Initiative



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# Today's Speakers

## Khari Garvin

*Director, Office of Head Start*

## Heather Wanderski

*Director, Program Operations Division, Office of Head Start*

## Priscilla Hodge

*Program Specialist, Program Operations Division, Office of Head Start*



# Today's Topics

- Happy Birthday, Head Start!
- Office of Head Start Purpose & Priorities
- FEI Policy Requirements & Purpose
- Resuming the FEI
- Resources
- Questions & Answers





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YEARS OF **HELPING**  
**CHILDREN** AND  
**FAMILIES THRIVE**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, HEAD START!



# Office of Head Start Purpose

## Origins

As part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's *War on Poverty*, Head Start began as an eight-week demonstration project designed to help break the cycle of poverty

## Mission

Designed as an anti-poverty early childhood education program, Head Start prepares America's most vulnerable children, ages birth to five, to succeed in school and in life beyond school

## Program Description

Head Start programs promote the school readiness of young children from low-income families by:

- Enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development
- Offering comprehensive services such as early learning, nutrition, health, family well-being and parent engagement



# Office of Head Start Priorities





# FEI Policy Requirements and Purpose

- I. FEI Policy Requirements
- II. FEI Purpose



# Full Enrollment Initiative Policy Requirements

## **Head Start Act** *Section 641A(h) of the Head Start Act*

- Outlines recipient enrollment reporting requirements
- Outlines OHS's enrollment review and authority to adjust and redistribute funds
- Outlines expectations of 12-month plan to reduce/eliminate underenrollment

## **Program Instruction: Full Enrollment Initiative** *ACF-PI-HS-18-04*

- Outlines FEI processes and procedures
- Reiterates the importance of reaching full enrollment



# Full Enrollment Initiative Policy Requirements

## **Enrollment Reporting** *Section [641A\(h\)\(2\)](#) of the Head Start Act*

- Recipients report actual enrollment for Head Start and/or Early Head Start program on a monthly basis

## **OHS Enrollment Review** *Section [641A\(h\)\(3\)\(A\)](#) of the Head Start Act*

- Underenrolled recipients determined based on at least 4 consecutive months of data
- Recipients with 4 or more consecutive months of underenrollment in any Head Start and/or Early Head Start program will receive an '**Initial Underenrollment Letter**' from the Regional Office [ACF-PI-HS-18-04](#)
  - The 12-month period for determining chronic underenrollment starts 10 calendar days from the date the *Underenrollment Letter* is sent

# Full Enrollment Initiative Policy Requirements

## **Underenrollment Plan** *Section 641A(h)(3)(B) of the Head Start Act*

- Recipient must develop, in collaboration with OHS, a plan and timetable for addressing underenrollment
- OHS will provide timely and ongoing technical assistance to support recipient's implementation of plan

## **OHS Review & Adjustment** *Section 641A(h)(5) of the Head Start Act*

- If recipient does not reach at least 97% of funded enrollment after receiving technical assistance and developing and implementing the plan for 12 months, OHS may:
  - Designate recipient as chronically underenrolled
  - Recapture, withhold, or reduce base grant and funded enrollment

## **Appeal Process** *ACF-PI-HS-18-04*

- Recipient(s) who decide to appeal a recapture, withholding, or reduction in funding must submit a written appeal with supporting evidence to [OHS.Enrollment@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:OHS.Enrollment@acf.hhs.gov)



# Purpose of the Full Enrollment Initiative

## Reaching eligible children and families of greatest need



**Partner** with recipients to identify challenges in achieving and maintaining full enrollment



**Collaborate** with recipients on the development of a plan to address barriers to full enrollment



**Provide** technical assistance support necessary to reach and maintain full enrollment



**Support** recipients in making the necessary adjustments to program design to meet community need



**Practice** effective stewardship of federal funds by reaching children and families of greatest need

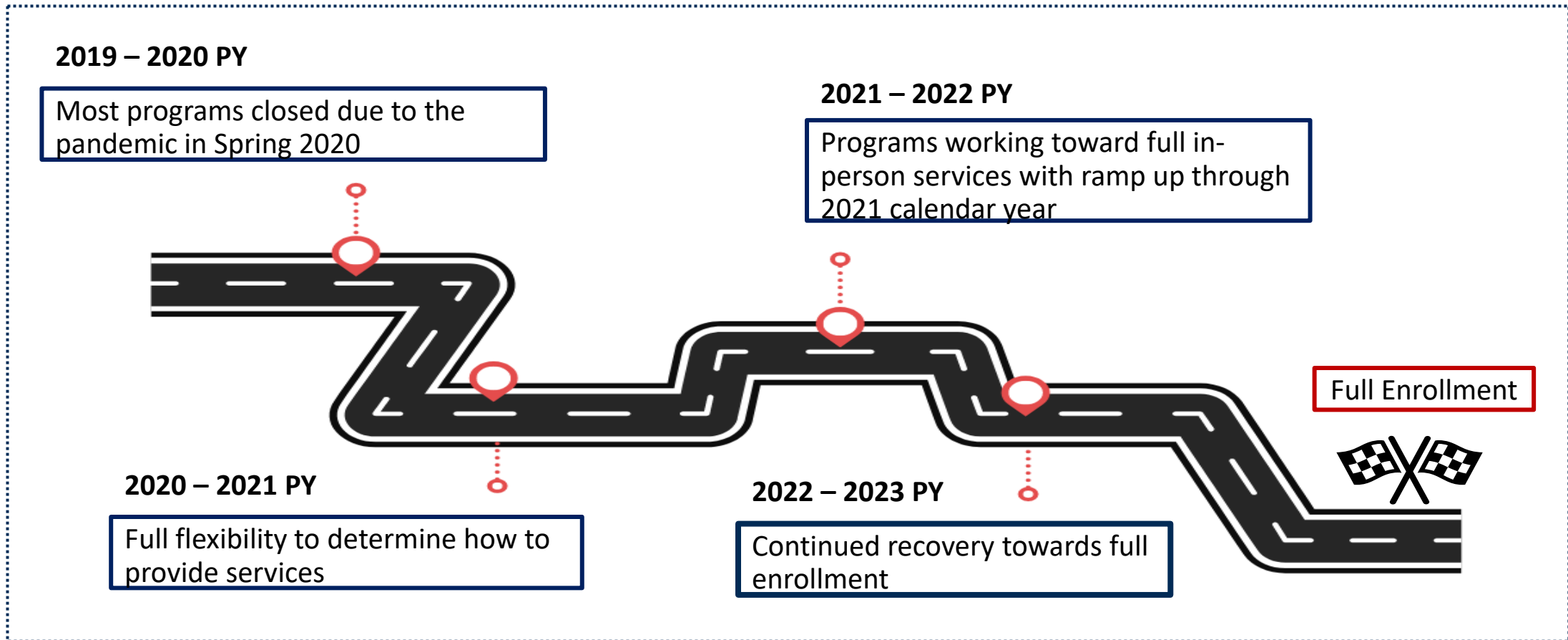


# Resuming the FEI

- I. Road to Recovery
- II. FEI Entry & Expectations
- III. National Enrollment Data



# Road to Recovery



# Resuming the Full Enrollment Initiative

## Staggered Approach

- In September 2022, OHS resumed the Full Enrollment Initiative using staggered approach
- Entry into the FEI began with recipients reporting significant underenrollment (less than 50%)
- Over time, additional recipients reporting underenrollment entered the FEI
- Staggered entry will continue until **all** recipients reporting underenrollment have entered into the FEI by January 2024
  - Enrollment determinations for migrant and seasonal programs will be based on enrollment reports from September 2023 through August 2024





# What to expect as part of the FEI process?

## Initial Underenrollment Letter

- Informs recipient of entry into the FEI
- Outlines FEI requirements, reporting requirements, and next steps

## Initial Underenrollment Meeting

- Opportunity to discuss the FEI, expectations, and ask questions
- OHS requests the Board Chair and/or a Governing Body Official attend meeting

## Underenrollment Plan

- Working plan to reduce underenrollment must be submitted to the Regional Office within 30 days of the initial underenrollment meeting
- Regional office does not formally approve plans but will use plans to support and facilitate conversations during the 12-month period

## Monthly Enrollment Reporting

- Monthly enrollment must be reported by center and program option using the Center Level Reporting Spreadsheet in HSES

## OHS Partnership and Support

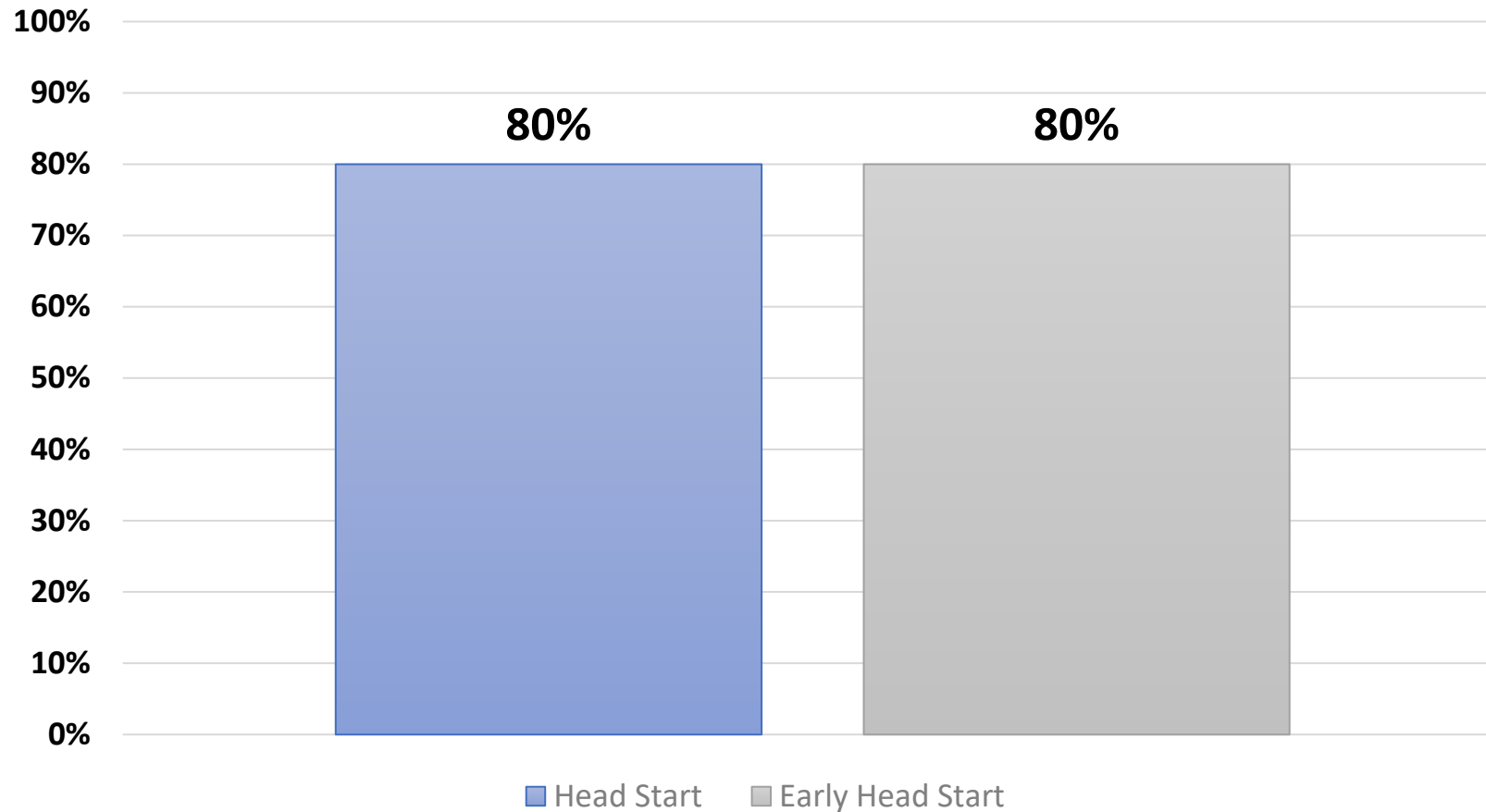
- Recognition of challenges facing Head Start recipients
- Acknowledgement of the impacts that the pandemic has created for program operations
- Support in making the necessary adjustments to program design to meet community need

## OHS Training and Technical Assistance

- Ongoing training and technical assistance throughout the 12-month period from regional office and/or T/TA network
- Collaboration to identify challenges in achieving and maintaining full enrollment
- Partnering on plan and strategy to reach full enrollment
- Technical assistance to support recipient's implementation of plan

# National Enrollment

March 2023

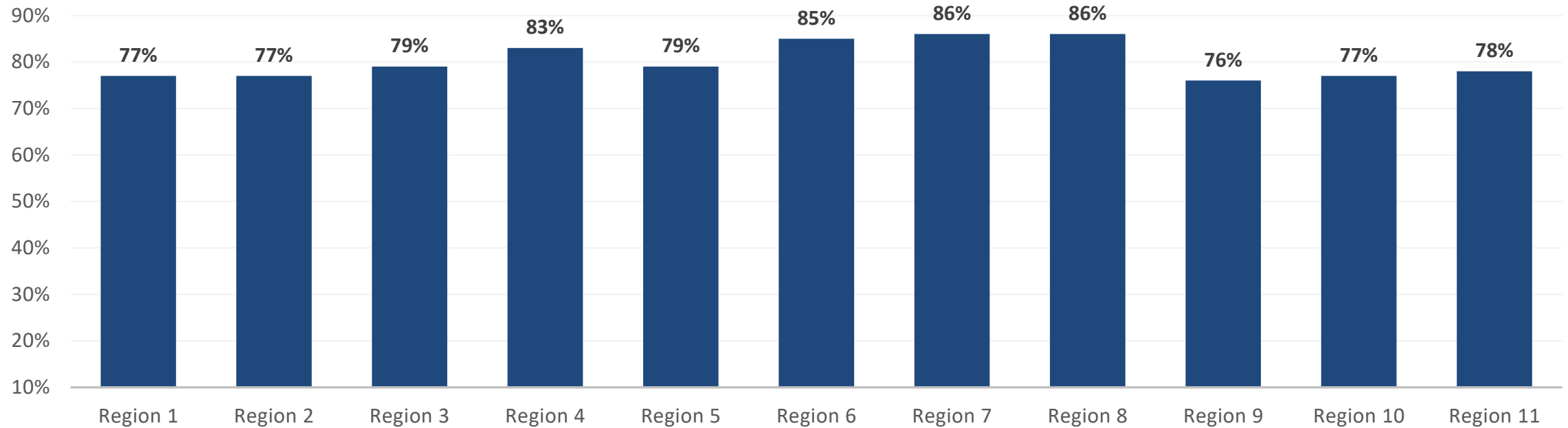


**Note:** This chart is missing data from 34 grant recipients that had not reported enrollment numbers at the time the data was pulled. This does not include Region 12 data.



# National Enrollment by Regions

March 2023

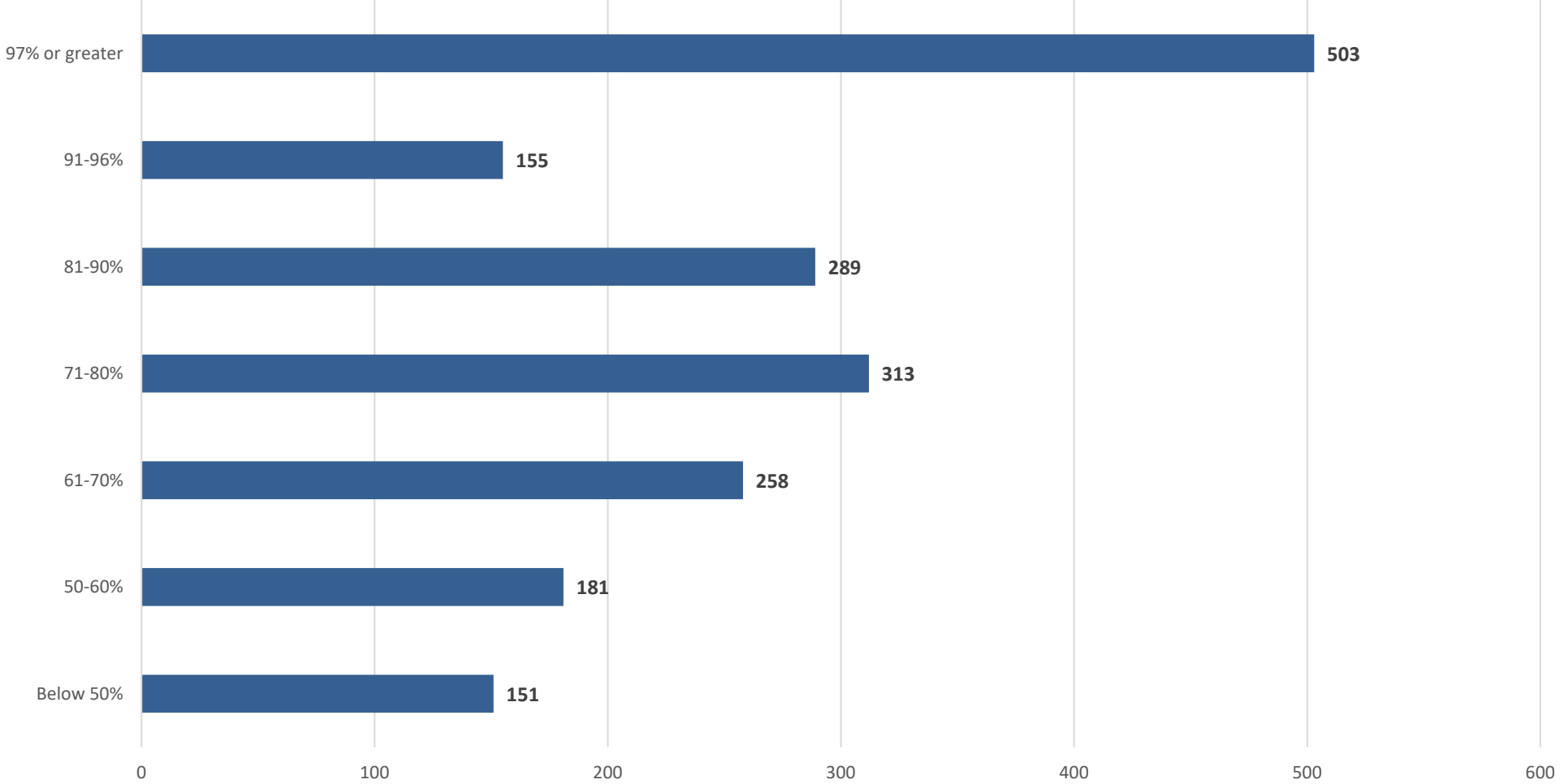


**Note:** This chart is missing data from 34 grant recipients that had not reported enrollment numbers at the time the data was pulled. This does not include Region 12.



# National Enrollment Thresholds by Grant

March 2023



**Note:** (n=1850) This chart is missing data from 43 grant recipients that had not reported enrollment numbers at the time the data was pulled. This does not include Region 12 data.



# Resources

## Head Start Policy and Regulations:

- Section 641A(h) of the Head Start Act
- ACF-PI-HS-18-04 Full Enrollment Initiative
- ACF-IM-HS-22-09 Enrollment Reductions and Conversion of Head Start Slots to Early Head Start Slots
  - Enrollment Reduction and Conversion Considerations

## ECLKC – Strategic Planning:

- Foundations for Excellence
- Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework

## ECLKC – Enrollment:

- ERSEA: Assessment Tool
- ERSEA: Strategies During a Pandemic
- ERSEA Insights
  - I. Eligibility
  - II. Recruitment
  - III. Selection
  - IV. Enrollment
  - V. Attendance

## ECLKC - Workforce & Recruitment:

- ACF-IM-HS-22-06 Strategies to Stabilize the Head Start Workforce
- Promoting Staff Well-being
- Creating a Staff Wellness Action Plan

**Question 1:** The Head Start Act was last reauthorized in 2007. Given this was over 15 years ago and pre-pandemic, has OHS considered that the FEI requirements outlined in the Act are out of touch with the current state of early care and education?

- The FEI operationalizes the provision in the Head Start Act **and** presents an opportunity for recipients to partner with OHS to identify challenges to achieving and maintaining full enrollment and make the necessary adjustments to program design to meet community need
- OHS is committed to partnering with grant recipients to support and sustain quality programming that prepares children for school and life

**Question 2:** I understand that Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs have not been evaluated for entry into the FEI yet. Will their evaluation include a staggered approach similar to the approach discussed today?

- Historically, migrant and seasonal programs have been considered underenrolled for the year if at the end of the budget period **cumulative enrollment** is less than 97% of the funded enrollment
- Enrollment determinations will continue to be made based on cumulative enrollment at the end of each budget period
- Beginning September 2023, migrant and seasonal programs' cumulative enrollment reports will be evaluated for entry into the FEI

**Question 3:** There is a section in the Initial Underenrollment Letter that outlines how much funding we may lose if we do not meet full enrollment. **If we are unable to achieve full enrollment, does this mean our grant will be reduced by that amount of funding at the end of the 12-month period?**

- The Initial Underenrollment Letter contains a paragraph that outlines what is **potentially** at stake at the end of the 12-month period. The figures are provided for informational purposes only
- If a reduction in funding or enrollment is warranted at the end of 12-month period, such reductions will be based on enrollment across the 12-month period as outlined in Section 641A(h)(5) of the Head Start Act



**Question 4:** Our agency has three Head Start grants. Two of the grants are fully enrolled in all programs operated within each grant . However, the Early Head Start program operated under the third grant is underenrolled and recently entered into the FEI. **Does this mean that all three of our grants are now part of the FEI? If so, are we required to develop a separate plan for each?**

- The Initial Underenrollment Letter will indicate the grant, and programs operated under that grant, that have entered into the FEI. If you agency has multiple grants that enter in the FEI, you will receive a separate letter for each grant
- If your agency operates multiple grants, **only** those with 4 or more consecutive months of underenrollment in any Head Start and/or Early Head Start program will enter into the FEI
- If you have multiple grants that have entered into the FEI at the same time and are in the same Region, you may develop one plan that outlines a strategy for each of the underenrolled programs within those grants

# Thank You!

