

ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
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## PROGRAM INSTRUCTION

**TO:** Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees and Delegate Agencies

**SUBJECT:** Update to Funding for FY 2020 Supplemental Funds in Response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

### INSTRUCTION:

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-136), makes available \$750 million for programs under the Head Start Act, which includes up to \$500 million for the purpose of operating supplemental summer programs.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) published Program Instruction (PI) [ACF-PI-HS-20-03](#) on April 14, 2020 with information on applying for funding made available under the CARES Act. Due to the continued fluidity of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, this PI supersedes ACF-PI-HS-20-03.

In this PI, OHS updates funding instructions to provide greater flexibility so all grantees can respond to the unique and constantly evolving circumstances within their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides updated guidance and a simplified process for applying for all funds under the CARES Act. All CARES Act funding, including funds for voluntary summer programs, will be distributed as one-time funding by formula based on each grantee's funded enrollment.

### Updated Funding Guidance

Many states and localities implemented stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders to combat the spread of COVID-19 in March, April, and May, resulting in an unprecedented closure of Head Start programs across the country. Federal, state, and local officials are issuing new guidance on how communities will reopen in the coming weeks and months, and decisions could shift based on emerging data. OHS recognizes grantees will need flexibility to carefully plan reopening Head Start and Early Head Start programs while adhering to state and local guidance. Even with the best of planning, grantees may not be able to anticipate all needs and challenges that will arise over time.

Because grantees cannot predict with certainty when programs can safely open, OHS wants to ensure CARES Act funds are awarded in a manner that supports grantees' operation of supplemental summer programs while maintaining flexibility to repurpose those funds for other

one-time activities related to COVID-19, if needed. To achieve this, OHS has updated the funding guidance to fully distribute CARES Act funds by formula based on each grantee's funded enrollment. This will allow all grantees to be nimble and modify their spending plans as necessary based on state and local guidance. It will also mitigate the risk of either a substantial delay or unbalanced distribution of funding if a significant portion is separately awarded for the sole purpose of summer programs and some grantees are not able to operate during the summer as intended.

Grantees planning to operate summer programs are expected to continue to move forward with those plans if able to do so. Further, grantees that were not planning to operate summer programs now have the flexibility to do so. Summer programs are critical to offset losses in learning opportunities and comprehensive services due to program closures resulting from COVID-19. Grantees that are able to operate should continue to make every effort to prioritize (1) enrolled children who are projected to enter kindergarten at the beginning of the 2020–2021 school year and (2) enrolled children with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Summer programs are still expected to provide the full range of comprehensive services to the extent possible, with a focus on preparing children for the coming school year.

Most grantees will receive sufficient funding to implement a summer program as planned. Others may need to revise their original plans to align with the adjusted one-time funding amount by formula, based on each grantee's funded enrollment. Grantees will have the flexibility to make programmatic changes or implement innovative approaches to adhere to state and local guidance. In addition, this simplified approach allows grantees the opportunity to use those funds for other one-time activities in response to COVID-19 if a summer program cannot operate.

To implement this updated funding approach, Supplement – COVID-19 One-Time applications already in progress will be amended to reflect adjusted amounts made available by formula. Programs no longer need to submit the separate 2020 Summer Supplement application.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information and materials on COVID-19, including summer programing, are available on the [Responding to COVID-19](#) page on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) website. This webpage continues to be updated on a regular basis.

Please direct any questions regarding this PI to your Regional Office.

Thank you again for your work on behalf of children and families.

/ Dr. Deborah Bergeron /

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