ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Head Start | 4th Floor – Switzer Memorial Building, 330 C Street SW, Washington DC 20024 eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

# Program Performance Summary Report

**To: Authorizing Official/Board Chairperson**

*Dr. Francis Muska*

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**From: Responsible HHS Official**

**Date: 06/27/2023**

**Mr. Khari M. Garvin**

**Director, Office of Head Start**

From June 5, 2023 to June 7, 2023, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area One (FA1) monitoring review of Connecticut Institute for Communities, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This report contains information about the grant recipient's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or Public Law 110-134, *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007.*

The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your governing body, policy council, parents, and staff for their engagement in the review process. The FA1 review allows the OHS to understand how programs are progressing in providing services in the 5-year grant cycle. The report includes the performance measures used to understand recipient progress towards program goals. You can use this report to identify where your program was able to describe progress toward implementing program services that promote quality outcomes for children and families. Please contact your Regional Office for guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Your Regional Office will follow up on the content of this report and can work with you to identify resources to support your program’s continuous improvement.

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT

Copies of this report will be distributed to the following:
Ms. Marina Winkler, Regional Program Manager
Mrs. Katherine Curran, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
Mrs. Robin Scott, Head Start Director
Mrs. Robin Scott, Early Head Start Director
Ms. Kari Gutierrez, Early Head Start Director
Ms. Kari Gutierrez, Head Start Director

## Grant(s) included as part of this review

| Grant Recipient Name | Grant Number(s) |
|---|---|
| Connecticut Institute For Communities, Inc. | 01CH010527,<br>01CH011897 |

## Glossary of Terms

| Finding Type | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Area of Concern (AOC)** | An area in which the agency needs to improve performance. These issues should be discussed with the grant recipient's Regional Office for possible technical assistance. |
| **Area of Noncompliance (ANC)** | An area in which the agency is out of compliance with Federal requirements (including but not limited to the Head Start Act or one or more of the regulations) in one or more areas of performance. This status requires a written timeline for correction and possible technical assistance or guidance from the grant recipient's program specialist. If not corrected within the specified timeline, this status becomes a deficiency. |
| **Deficiency** | As defined in the Head Start Act, the term "deficiency" means:<br>(A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves:<br>(i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff;<br>(ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations;<br>(iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management;<br>(iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter;<br>(v) loss of legal status (as determined by the Secretary) or financial viability, loss of permits, debarment from receiving Federal grants or contracts, or the improper use of Federal funds; or<br>(vi) failure to meet any other Federal or State requirement that the agency has shown an unwillingness or inability to correct, after notice from the Secretary, within the period specified;<br>(B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or<br>(C) an unresolved area of noncompliance. |

**Program Overview**

Connecticut Institute for Communities, Inc. is dedicated to fostering opportunities for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. The grant recipient offers education, health, housing, and other support services to residents of western Connecticut. Center-based Head Start and Early Head Start opportunities are available to over 500 children and families.

# Program Design and Management

**Program Design**
The grant recipient's program design and structure takes into account community strengths and needs.

**Program Management**
The grant recipient has an approach for providing effective management and oversight of all program areas and fiduciary responsibilities.

**Program Governance**
The grant recipient maintains a formal structure for program governance that includes a governing body, a policy council (or policy committee for delegates), and parent committees.

## Program Design and Management Summary

Connecticut Institute for Communities, Inc. used data to guide decision-making and improvement efforts. For example, enrollment and parent feedback data indicated a lack of interest in half-day services. In response, the program increased the number of full-day classroom slots and offered wraparound services to accommodate working parents. These changes allowed the program to address community needs and move toward full enrollment.

## Designing Quality Education and Child Development Program Services

**Alignment with School Readiness**
The grant recipient's approach to school readiness aligns with the expectations of receiving schools, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and state early learning standards.

**Effective and Intentional Teaching Practices**
The grant recipient has strategies to ensure teaching practices promote progress toward school readiness.

**Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness**
The grant recipient has an approach for ensuring teachers are prepared to implement the curriculum and support children’s progress toward school readiness.

**Home-based Program Services**
Not Applicable.

## Education and Child Development Services Summary

Connecticut Institute for Communities, Inc. supported the growth and development of children with special needs. A data review indicated that most children with Individual Education Programs or Individualized Family Service Plans were receiving services to address speech concerns. To ensure these children received the assistance they needed, the program partnered with the local education agency's speech-language pathologists, who visited centers, provided staff training, and conducted on-site therapy sessions. The program's efforts helped all children move toward school readiness.

# Designing Quality Health Program Services

**Child Health Status and Care**

The grant recipient has an approach for ensuring the delivery of high-quality health services.

**Safety Practices**

The grant recipient implements a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments and ensuring all staff have complete background checks.

## Health Services Summary

Connecticut Institute for Communities, Inc.'s strategic planning and risk management efforts helped keep children safe. After identifying concerns with supervision practices, the program revised its active supervision policy to include a mandate to count children when groups transitioned into or out of classrooms. The program also provided active supervision training to all staff. Finally, the program installed whiteboards in all classrooms where teachers recorded each child's location. The changes implemented by the program supported safe learning environments for children.

## Designing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services

**Family Well-being**
The grant recipient has an approach for collaborating with families to support family well-being.

**Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports**
The grant recipient has an approach for providing services that strengthen parenting skills.

## Family and Community Engagement Services Summary

Connecticut Institute for Communities, Inc. supported family goal-setting and attainment. Staff members worked with families to identify their needs and set goals within the first 4 months of enrollment. The program then provided information and assistance to families individually or through workshops. For example, the program invited local agencies to facilitate sessions on positive discipline, routines, and transitions. By understanding the needs of each family, the program helped them make meaningful improvements.

# Developing Effective Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance (ERSEA) Strategies and Fiscal Infrastructure

**Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance**
The grant recipient enrolls children or expectant mothers who are categorically eligible or who meet defined income-eligibility requirements.

**Enrollment Verification**
The grant recipient maintains and tracks enrollment for all enrolled participants.

**Fiscal Infrastructure, Capacity, and Responsiveness**
The grant recipient's fiscal staff have the qualifications needed to provide oversight of the grant.

The grant recipient has a budget development and revision process that includes stakeholders and appropriate approvals, and ensures continuous alignment with program design, goals, and objectives.

## ERSEA and Fiscal Summary

Connecticut Institute for Communities, Inc. supported the enrollment of eligible families with the greatest need. The program analyzed community data to identify and address trends within its service area. For instance, when the community assessment indicated increasing rates of undocumented families, the program edited its selection criteria to award additional points to applicants in this category. The program's use of data allowed it to meet the community's changing needs.

The grant recipient developed financial practices to ensure the oversight of Federal funds. The qualified fiscal director and finance team followed policies and procedures to manage multiple funding sources. The fiscal director also met monthly with the program director to discuss the budget and make sure that funds addressed needs and goals. The grant recipient's collaborative oversight ensured grant funds supported Head Start and Early Head Start needs.

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