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
Connecticut Institute For Communities, Inc.
120 Main St Fl 4
Danbury, CT 06810 - 7834

From: Responsible HHS Official

Date: 12/13/2023

Mr. Khari M. Garvin
Director, Office of Head Start

From October 16, 2023 to October 20, 2023, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review of Connecticut Institute For Communities, Inc. 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. Based on the information gathered during this review, it has been determined that your program has at least one area of noncompliance.

This report provides you with detailed information in each area where program performance did not meet applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards, laws, regulations and policy requirements.

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

Grant(s) included as part of this review

Grant Recipient Name	Grant Number(s)
Connecticut Institute For Communities, Inc.	01CH011897

Glossary of Terms

Term	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: (A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves: (i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff; (ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations; (iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management; (iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter; (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 (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; (B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or (C) an unresolved area of noncompliance.
Strong Practice	An activity or strategy that shows promise for long term sustainable impact. A Strong Practice has an objective basis for claiming effectiveness, potential for replication, and is shareable among other organizations.

How To Read This Report

The Focus Area Two report includes the following sections:

- **Program Overview,** provides a summary describing the grant recipient.
- **Performance Summary,** provides a table view of compliance by Performance Area.
- **Review Details,** provides details on the grant recipient performance in each Content Area, Performance Area, and Performance Measure.

Program Overview

Connecticut Institute for Families, Inc. is a nonprofit organization supporting families in western Connecticut. The program is funded to offer center-based Head Start and Early Head Start services to 299 children. Centers are located in the urban cities of Danbury and Norwalk.

Performance Summary

This section contains an overview of compliance information determined through this review. Detailed information can be found in the Review Details section.

Compliance Information

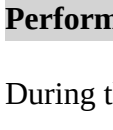
Content Area	Performance Area	Grant Number(s)	Compliance Level	Applicable Standards	Timeframe for Correction
Education and Child Development Services	Curricula, Screening, and Assessment Tools	01CH011897	Area of Concern	1302.33(a)(1)	Follow up with Regional Office for support
Education and Child Development Services	Qualifications, Professional Development, and Coaching	01CH011897	Area of Concern	1302.91(e)(1)	Follow up with Regional Office for support
Health Services	Child Health and Oral Health Status and Care	01CH011897	Area of Noncompliance	1302.42(b)(1)(i)	120 days
Health Services	Child Health and Oral Health Status and Care	01CH011897	Area of Concern	1302.42(b)(2)	Follow up with Regional Office for

					support
Health Services	Safe and Sanitary Environments	01CH011897	Area of Noncompliance	1302.47(b)(1)(iii)	120 days
Health Services	Safe and Sanitary Environments	01CH011897	Area of Concern	1302.47(b)(1)(ix)	Follow up with Regional Office for support
Health Services	Safe and Sanitary Environments	01CH011897	Area of Concern	1302.47(b)(2)(v)	Follow up with Regional Office for support

Review Details

This section of the report provides details on grant recipient performance in each Content Area, Performance Area, and Performance Measure.

- Each Performance Area includes the compliant Performance Measures monitored in this review.
- If there are any findings or Strong Practices observed, they will be listed within that Performance Area.



Program Design, Management, and Improvement

Below is a list of all Performance Areas and compliant Performance Measures monitored in this Content Area, with details on findings and Strong Practices observed, as applicable.

Performance Area: Program Design and Strategic Planning

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient maintains a system and procedures for collecting, managing and reporting on accurate, timely data.
- The grant recipient adjusts its program design to remain responsive to shifts in community needs, strengths, and resources over time.
- The grant recipient uses program data to routinely monitor performance, progress towards goals and desired outcomes, and drive program improvement.

Performance Area: Program Governance

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient collaborates effectively across program staff, the governing body, and the policy council to facilitate effective program governance.
- The grant recipient’s governing body is engaged and effective in providing its legal and fiscal oversight.
- The grant recipient’s policy councils and policy committees are effective in providing program direction.

Performance Area: Staffing and Staff Supports

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient supports staff members' continuous improvement and professional development.
- The grant recipient establishes high expectations for staff, and implements ongoing communication and training systems to reinforce organizational accountability.
- The grant recipient develops systems that support the Head Start workforce by providing fair compensation, opportunities for career advancement, and a positive work environment for staff.
- The grant recipient's leadership and management team have clearly defined, manageable roles and responsibilities and the appropriate experience to effectively execute Head Start program operations.

Education and Child Development Services

Below is a list of all Performance Areas and compliant Performance Measures monitored in this Content Area, with details on findings and Strong Practices observed, as applicable.

Performance Area: Curricula, Screening, and Assessment Tools

Area of Concern - 1302.33(a)(1)

Summary

Grant Number(s) Cited: 01CH011897

Timeframe for Correction: Follow up with Regional Office for support

Performance Standard Details

Regulation Text: 1302.33 Child screenings and assessments. (a) Screening. (1) In collaboration with each child's parent and with parental consent, a program must complete or obtain a current developmental screening to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, and emotional skills within 45 calendar days of when the child first attends the program or, for the home-based program option, receives a home visit. A program that operates for 90 days or less must complete or obtain a current developmental screening within 30 calendar days of when the child first attends the program.

Compliance Details

- All children received developmental screenings, however, between 1 and 49% of screenings were completed after the prescribed timeframe.

Additional details from this review event:

- A review of developmental screening data for the 2022-2023 program year indicated the grant recipient did not complete 17 of 302 (6%) within 45 days of children's enrollment.
- A review of behavioral screening data for the 2022-2023 program year indicated the grant recipient did not complete 16 of 302 (5%) within 45 days of children's enrollment.

Performance Area: Teaching Strategies and Learning Environments

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient provides well-organized learning environments and schedules that promote healthy development for enrolled children.
- The grant recipient uses intentionally designed lesson plans to deliver developmentally appropriate experiences for children.
- The grant recipient staff provide responsive, effective care and effective teaching practices that are tailored to meet the needs of all children.

Performance Area: Qualifications, Professional Development, and Coaching

Area of Concern - 1302.91(e)(1)

Summary

Grant Number(s) Cited: 01CH011897

Timeframe for Correction: Follow up with Regional Office for support

Performance Standard Details

Regulation Text: 1302.91 Staff qualifications and competency requirements. (e) Child and family services staff. (1) Early Head Start center-based teacher qualification requirements. As prescribed in section 645A(h) of the Act, a program must ensure center-based teachers that provide direct services to infants and toddlers in Early Head Start centers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or comparable credential, and have been trained or have equivalent coursework in early childhood development with a focus on infant and toddler development.

Compliance Details

- One or more center-based Early Head Start teachers did not have the required qualifications but had a professional

development plan in place and had been pursuing required qualifications for less than two years since their hire.

Additional details from this review event:

- A review of the staff qualification tracking form identified 2 of 19 Early Head Start center-based teachers who did not have a Child Development Associate (CDA) or comparable credential.
- The two teachers, hired in 2023, were on professional development plans monitored by human resources staff and were enrolled in coursework to obtain CDAs.

Health Services

Below is a list of all Performance Areas and compliant Performance Measures monitored in this Content Area, with details on findings and Strong Practices observed, as applicable.

Performance Area: Child Health and Oral Health Status and Care

Area of Noncompliance - 1302.42(b)(1)(i)

Summary

Grant Number(s) Cited: 01CH011897

Timeframe for Correction: 120 days

Performance Standard Details

Regulation Text: 1302.42 Child health status and care (b) Ensuring up-to-date child health status. (1) Within 90 calendar days after the child first attends the program or, for the home-based program option, receives a home visit, with the exceptions noted in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, a program must: (i) Obtain determinations from health care and oral health care professionals as to whether or not the child is up-to-date on a schedule of age appropriate preventive and primary medical and oral health care, based on: the well-child visits and dental periodicity schedules as prescribed by the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program of the Medicaid agency of the state in which they operate, immunization recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and any additional recommendations from the local Health Services Advisory Committee that are based on prevalent community health problems.

Compliance Details

- Between 6% and 30% of children did not have an initial oral health determination made by a healthcare professional.

Additional details from this review event:

- A review of EHS Health Requirements documentation indicated that the grant recipient did not obtain an oral health determination for 12 of 72 (17%) Early Head Start children who were eligible for oral health visits for the program year 2022-2023.
- A review of Requirements Assessment documentation indicated that the grant recipient did not obtain an oral health determination for 49 of 230 (21%) Head Start children for the program year 2022-2023.

Area of Concern - 1302.42(b)(2)

Summary

Grant Number(s) Cited: 01CH011897

Timeframe for Correction: Follow up with Regional Office for support

Performance Standard Details

Regulation Text: 1302.42 Child health status and care.(b) Ensuring up-to-date child health status.(2) Within 45 calendar days after the child first attends the program or, for the home-based program option, receives a home visit, a program must either obtain or perform evidence-based vision and hearing screenings.

Compliance Details

- Between 1% and 49% of children had not received a vision and hearing screening within the 45-day timeframe, and the program made reasonable attempts to complete the screenings.

Additional details from this review event:

- A review of vision screening data indicated the grant recipient did not obtain results for 8 of 302 (3%) enrolled Head Start and Early Head Start children for the program year 2022-2023.
- A review of hearing screening data indicated the grant recipient did not obtain results for 19 of 302 (6%) enrolled Head Start and Early Head Start children for the program year 2022-2023.

Performance Area: Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well-Being

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient develops a positive program environment, in partnership with a qualified mental health consultant, that promotes the mental health and social emotional well-being of children.
- The grant recipient provides family support services for mental health and social emotional well-being.
- The grant recipient implements positive discipline practices and policies that prohibit the use of expulsion and suspension.

Performance Area: Child Nutrition

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient implements nutrition services that accommodate children's unique nutritional needs.

Performance Area: Safe and Sanitary Environments

Area of Noncompliance - 1302.47(b)(1)(iii)

Summary

Grant Number(s) Cited: 01CH011897

Timeframe for Correction: 120 days

Performance Standard Details

Regulation Text: 1302.47 Safety practices. (b) A program must develop and implement a system of management, including ongoing training, oversight, correction and continuous improvement in accordance with §1302.102, that includes policies and practices to ensure all facilities, equipment and materials, background checks, safety training, safety and hygiene practices and administrative safety procedures are adequate to ensure child safety. This system must ensure: (1) Facilities. All facilities where children are served, including areas for learning, playing, sleeping, toileting, and eating are, at a minimum: (iii) Free from pollutants, hazards and toxins that are accessible to children and could endanger children's safety.

Compliance Details

- The grant recipient did not ensure all facilities where children were served were free from pollutants, hazards, and toxins.

Additional details from this review event:

- A review of water testing reports found the grant recipient tested only 1 faucet from each of its 3 facilities despite 2 of the buildings being constructed prior to 1978.
- One of the facilities was built in 1933 and had previously been abated for lead paint. The water tested for this building came from a gym fountain rather than one of the classroom faucets used to supply children's water.
- The director stated that all children's drinking water is sourced from the faucets in the grant recipient's 21 classrooms.

Area of Concern - 1302.47(b)(1)(ix)

Summary

Grant Number(s) Cited: 01CH011897

Timeframe for Correction: Follow up with Regional Office for support

Performance Standard Details

Regulation Text: 1302.47 Safety practices. (b) A program must develop and implement a system of management, including ongoing training, oversight, correction and continuous improvement in accordance with §1302.102, that includes policies and practices to ensure all facilities, equipment and materials, background checks, safety training, safety and hygiene practices and administrative safety procedures are adequate to ensure child safety. This system must ensure: (1) Facilities. All facilities where children are served, including areas for learning, playing, sleeping, toileting, and eating are, at a minimum: (ix) Kept safe through an ongoing system of preventative maintenance.

Compliance Details

- The grant recipient did not have a written preventative maintenance plan to ensure safety of facilities.

Additional details from this review event:

- The Head Start director stated the grant recipient did not have a written preventative maintenance plan to ensure the safety of facilities.

Area of Concern - 1302.47(b)(2)(v)

Summary

Grant Number(s) Cited: 01CH011897

Timeframe for Correction: Follow up with Regional Office for support

Performance Standard Details

Regulation Text: 1302.47 Safety practices (b) A program must develop and implement a system of management, including ongoing training, oversight, correction and continuous improvement in accordance with §1302.102, that includes policies and practices to ensure all facilities, equipment and materials, background checks, safety training, safety and hygiene practices and administrative safety procedures are adequate to ensure child safety. This system must ensure: (2) Equipment and materials. Indoor and outdoor play equipment, cribs, cots, feeding chairs, strollers, and other equipment used in the care of enrolled children, and as applicable, other equipment and materials meet standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or the American Society for Testing and Materials, International (ASTM). All equipment and materials must at a minimum: (v) Be kept safe through an ongoing system of preventative maintenance.

Compliance Details

- The grant recipient did not have a written preventative maintenance plan to ensure safety of equipment and materials.

Additional details from this review event:

- The director stated the grant recipient did not have a written preventative maintenance plan to ensure the safety of equipment and materials.

Performance Area: Expectant Families

Not applicable

Family and Community Engagement Services

Below is a list of all Performance Areas and compliant Performance Measures monitored in this Content Area, with details on findings and Strong Practices observed, as applicable.

Performance Area: Program Foundations to Support Family Well-Being and Family Engagement

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- Staff are qualified, supported, and develop family assignments based on the specific needs of enrolled families.
- The grant recipient continuously engages all families into the program through open and effective communication.

Performance Area: Family Partnerships

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient implements a family partnership process that includes supports for family-driven goals and progress toward outcomes.

Performance Area: Promoting Strong Parenting, Parent-Child Relationships, and Engagement in Children's Learning

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient implements a family partnership process that includes supports for family-driven goals and progress toward outcomes.
- The grant recipient implements strategies that promote parental skills and engage parents in children's development.
- The grant recipient chooses and implements a research-based parenting curriculum.

Performance Area: Community Partnerships

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient has identified community partnerships that meet the needs and interests of families.

Fiscal Infrastructure

Below is a list of all Performance Areas and compliant Performance Measures monitored in this Content Area, with details on findings and Strong Practices observed, as applicable.

Performance Area: Budget Development, Implementation, and Oversight

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient engages in a transparent, data-informed strategic process to develop and maintain a budget that aligns with program goals and circumstances.

Performance Area: Comprehensive Financial Management Structure and System

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient maintains effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and assets to avoid theft, fraud, waste, and abuse.
- The grant recipient has implemented written procedures to ensure that only allowable costs are charged to the Head Start award in accordance with Federal statutes, regulations and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.
- The grant recipient implements a system for maintaining financial records and generating information needed to manage and safeguard Federal funds.

Performance Area: Facilities and Equipment Management Systems

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient implements a system for ensuring compliance with requirements for the acquisition, record-keeping, insurance, and disposal of facilities purchased, constructed, or renovated (major renovations) with Head Start funds.
- The grant recipient implements a system for ensuring that equipment purchased with Head Start funds is acquired, used, and disposed of in accordance with requirements.
- The grant recipient assesses and mitigates risk and maintains property loss, casualty, and liability insurance consistent with the replacement value of property and determined risk of liability.

Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

Below is a list of all Performance Areas and compliant Performance Measures monitored in this Content Area, with details on findings and Strong Practices observed, as applicable.

Performance Area: Eligibility

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient implements a clear, consistent, and compliant process for enrolling eligible families.
- The grant recipient trains staff to follow ERSEA regulations and establishes written policies and procedures to ensure compliance with eligibility requirements.

Strong Practice Details:

During the review event the OHS monitoring team observed the following Strong Practice(s) in the Performance Area:

- The grant recipient has an eligibility verification process to protect the program against fraudulent enrollment.

Performance Area: Recruitment

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient implements a recruitment strategy focusing on all families with eligible children, with specific outreach efforts to families with vulnerable children.

Performance Area: Selection

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient establishes selection criteria and a waitlist based on community needs.

Performance Area: Enrollment

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient establishes practices to maintain full enrollment and accurately tracks current enrollment.
- The grant recipient fills at least ten percent of the program’s total funded enrollment with children eligible for services under IDEA.

Performance Area: Attendance

During the review event the OHS monitoring team identified the following Performance Measures as compliant:

- The grant recipient consistently employs strategies to encourage regular attendance.

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