Program Governance Resource Guide

Board of Directors

New River Community Action Head Start

August 2014

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Program Governance Resource Guide 3

I. The Life of a Board Member 5

a. Who's Who in HS Program Governance 6

b. Composition Requirements 7

c. Conflict of Interest 8

d. Training & Orientation 9

e. Frequently Used Resources

i. HS Act and Performance Standards 10

ii. ISP & Policies and Procedures 11

f. Board Meetings 12

II. Oversight of Head Start program 13

a. Reporting Requirements 14

b. Activity Requirements 15

c. Policy and Approval Requirements 16

Introduction to Program Governance Resource Guide

Board of Directors

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Program Governance Resource Guide - Board

What It Is:

The Program Governance Resource Guide – Board (PGRG) is a tool to assist both new and seasoned Board Members in accessing pertinent information to do your jobs successfully.

The PGRG contains the following sections:

- Introduction to the Program Governance Resource Guide
- The Life of a Board Member
- Oversight of the Head Start Program
- Fiscal Involvement
- Relationship with our program / Affiliate Agreement

Within each section, the content is designed in one of three formats:

- **What You Need To Know (WYNTK):** This section gives an overview of the main topic, highlighting how you're involved and, ultimately, how you are accountable for this information, and where to go to get even more detailed information.
-

How You're Involved:

- As a Board Member, you should receive a copy of the PGRG, review it at the beginning of the year for familiarity, and throughout the year for reference.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Since this guide is designed to provide you with all of the information necessary to do your jobs successfully, you are accountable for reviewing this guide and for completing each one of the tasks within this resource at the relevant time.
- As a Board member, you must be aware of your major responsibilities, which include legal and fiscal administration of the Head Start program. You must assure active, independent, and informed governance and ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

You Can Learn More:

- The complete Program Governance Resource Guide.

The Life of a Board Member

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Who's Who in HS Program Governance

What It Is:

Head Start Program Governance is a function of three primary groups:

The Parent Committee, a group established at the center level, which must be comprised exclusively of the parents of children currently enrolled at the center level for center-based programs.

The Policy Council, a group established at the grantee level through which parents can participate in policy making or in other decisions about the Head Start program. Policy Councils must be comprised of two types of representatives: parents of currently enrolled children and community representatives.

The Governing Body or Board of Directors, the group with the legal and fiscal responsibility for administering the Head Start program.

How You're Involved:

- As a Board Member, it is helpful understand both the differences between these three governing groups, and the nature of the coordination of their work.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Participating fully as a board member; assuring active, independent and informed governance; ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Legal and fiscal responsibility for administering the Head Start program.

You Can Learn More:

- Head Start Program Performance Standards § 1304.50 (a)
- Program Governance Resource Guide – Policy Council

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Composition Requirements

What It Is:

The Head Start Act requires that each Head Start program's Board of Directors be composed of members with specific qualifications. The Board membership should include at least one of the following:

- A member with background and expertise in fiscal management or accounting
- A member with background and expertise in early childhood education (ECE) and development
- A member who is a licensed attorney familiar with issues that come before your Board
- A member who is a current or former parent of a child enrolled in Head Start

Any additional members should reflect the community served by the Head Start program and have background and expertise in education, business administration, or community affairs.

If the Board is unable to recruit and retain a member or members with the fiscal, ECE, and/or attorney requirements, then a consultant in each of those areas should be utilized who meets the same requirements or has related expertise. This consultant can be compensated using funds from the Head Start grant or, if they choose to contribute their services, the program may claim that contribution as non-federal share.

How You're Involved:

- As a Board Member, you should be aware of the composition requirements and actively recruit and present members who satisfy them.
- If your Board is unable to recruit members who meet these requirements, you should maintain minutes that reflect the specifics around such recruitment efforts while also engaging/hiring consultants to help meet the requirements.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Maintaining an active Board roster, with members that are reflective of the community in which you serve and that meet the composition requirements.

You Can Learn More:

- Head Start Act 642 (c)(1)(B)(ii-vi)
- OHS – PC – E – 027

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Conflict of Interest

What It Is:

As a Board member, there are specific activities and/or relationships that one should not engage in, in order to dismiss the potential of a conflict of interest. Members of the Board should operate as an entity independent of staff employed by the Head Start program AND:

- Not have a financial conflict of interest with the Head Start program/agency
- Not receive compensation for serving on the Board or for providing services to the Head Start program/agency. (* Note: Board members can be reimbursed for reasonable costs incurred by members, such as for transportation and child care, and these costs may be contributed back to the program as non-federal share. The Board should develop a policy on such reimbursement.*)
- Not be employed, nor members of your immediate family be employed, by the Head Start program/agency.

Further, all members of the Board will sign a *Procurement Code of Conduct*, acknowledging the financial conflict of interest above and a *Standards of Conduct* policy that is consistent with the above.

How You're Involved:

- As a Board Member who is legally and fiscally responsible for the Head Start program, you should be diligent about your commitment to the *Standards of Conduct* as well as the commitment of your colleague members.
- If there is any concern about an activity of your own or another member, please raise the concern to the entire Board.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Ensuring that your Board adheres to the *Standards of Conduct* and does not engage in any activity that results in a conflict of interest.

You Can Learn More:

- Head Start Act 642 (c)(1)(C)(i-iv)
- OHS – PC – E – 029

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Training & Orientation

What It Is:

As a Board member, you must receive appropriate training and technical assistance to ensure you understand the information you receive and can oversee and participate in the program effectively.

After an initial orientation as to your roles and responsibilities as a Board member, the Head Start program should provide ongoing training opportunities for you on topics that may include:

- Understanding financial reporting
- The Self-Assessment process
- Strategic Planning: The development of Annual Goals
- Office of Head Start communications, including Information Memorandums (IMs) and/or Program Instructions (PIs)
- Head Start Requirements, including Performance Standards and the Head Start Act

How You're Involved:

- As a new Board member, you should receive orientation from program staff and/or state Training & Technical Assistance Specialists on your role and responsibilities.
- As an existing Board member, you should receive ongoing training from program staff and/or, state Training & Technical Assistance Specialists on additional Program Governance materials.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Ensuring that you have the knowledge and information to appropriately oversee the program and actively participate as a Board member. If you would like any additional training, please speak to the Board Chair or the Executive Director.

You Can Learn More:

- Head Start Act 642 (d)(3)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Head Start Act and Performance Standards

What It Is:

The law that authorizes Head Start, and the rules by which all Head Start programs must abide. Head Start was first authorized in 1961 by the first Head Start Act and subsequent Acts in 1981 and 2007 have re-authorized the program. The current Act defines the purpose of Head Start and offers general explanation on the funding, management, and record-keeping and reporting for Head Start programs. The Head Start Performance Standards are specific regulations that each program must follow – ranging from teacher qualifications to enrollment reporting to mortgage auditing – and their compliance is monitored every three years by the Office of Head Start.

How You're Involved:

Every Board member should familiarize themselves with the Head Start requirements.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Ensuring compliance with all Head Start Performance Standards.

For More Support:

- eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc: The Administration of Children and Families' **Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center**

ISP = Integrated Service Plans

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

ISP & Policies and Procedures

What It Is:

Planning tools and process guides. The ISP is the centerpiece of our planning process, and thus essential to providing high-quality services to children and families. The Head Start Program Performance Standards indicate what our program must do; the ISP outlines how we make those standards a reality every day. The ISP contains written plans, each of which provides a simple, clear overview and outline of one each service component. Policies and Procedures, are required by the Performance Standards, and are used to support specific aspects of our program.

How You're Involved:

These plans and policies/procedures are reviewed and revised each year by the leadership team and the Board to ensure that the ISP remains an up-to-date, living document.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Ensuring that the ISP and Policies and Procedures are implemented by staff.
- Offering feedback and completing edits as necessary.
- Approving the ISP and P&Ps.

For More Support:

- Your program's ISP and Policies and Procedures

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Board Meetings

What It Is:

The Board of Directors holds regular meetings (monthly) to discuss Head Start program business, make policy and administrative decisions, ensure high-quality services are being provided, and guarantee appropriate internal controls are being implemented to safeguard Federal funds. Board Meetings follow Robert's Rules of Order.

How You're Involved:

- Your rights and responsibilities at Board meetings include:
  - Attending the meetings
  - Make motions
  - Speaking, debating, discussing
  - Nominating
  - Voting
  - Holding office
  - Starting the meeting on time
  - Maintaining an agenda and receiving materials ahead of time

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Participating fully as a board member; assuring active, independent and informed governance; ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations.
- Legal and fiscal responsibility for administering the Head Start program.

You Can Learn More:

- Head Start Program Performance Standards § 1304.50 (g)

Oversight of Head Start Program

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

Reports & Information Requirements

What It Is:

As a Board member, there is a lot of financial and programmatic information that you will receive. It's important to know that you are required to receive and review the following timely, clear, and comprehensive reports:

- Monthly financial statements, including credit card expenditures
- Monthly program information summaries [*Note: this is included in the Director's Report and in the Manage by Information (MBI) report]
- Program enrollment reports, including attendance reports for children.
- Monthly reports or meals and snacks provided through the Department of Agriculture programs [*Note: this is included in the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) report]
- Financial audit
- Annual Self-Assessment, including findings related to such assessment
- Community-wide strategic planning and needs assessment (i.e., Community Assessment) of the Head Start agency, including applicable updates;
- Program information reports (PIR)

How You're Involved:

- As a new Board member, you should receive the above required reports that are timely, clear, and comprehensive. The reports should assist you with tracking programmatic and fiscal progress.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Understanding the reporting requirements, as well as the content of each report. If you have questions about the reports, please address them with the Board, the Board Chairman and/or the Executive Director.

You Can Learn More:

- Head Start Act 642 (d)(2)(A – I)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Activity Requirements

What It Is:

As a Board member, there are also many activities in which you may participate. In order to support program administration and implementation, you must participate in the following activities:

- Establishing procedures and criteria for recruiting, selecting, and enrolling children;
- Developing procedures for selecting Policy Council members;
- Establishing, adopting, and periodically updating written standards of conduct that determine how complaints are disclosed, addressed, and resolved, including investigations; and
- Reviewing all applications for funding and amendments to applications for funding.

How You're Involved:

- Not only should meeting minutes reflect your involvement in the required activities listed above, but you should also have a solid understanding of the each procedures and/or funding component.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Understanding the activity requirements, as well as the details of each procedure and/or funding component. If you have questions about the activities, please address them with the Board, the Board Chairman, the Executive Director.

You Can Learn More:

- Head Start Act 642 (c)(1)(E)(iv)(I-III, VI, X)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
Policy Review and Approval Requirements

What It Is:

As a Board member, there are also many policies that you may review and approve throughout the year. In order to support program administration and implementation, you must review and approve the following major policies of the Head Start program/agency:

- Annual Self Assessment;
- Financial Audit;
- Program's progress in carrying out the grant application provisions, including implementation of corrective actions;
- Personnel policies regarding hiring, evaluation, termination, and compensation [Note: Personnel Policies are found within our program's Employee Handbook];
- Policies and procedures regarding hiring, evaluation, compensation, and termination of the Executive Director, Head Start Director, Director of Human Resources, Chief Financial Officer, or other person in an equivalent position [Note: Personnel Policies are found within our program's Employee Handbook]; and
- Results from monitoring, including appropriate follow-up activities.

How You're Involved:

- You should receive copies of the above policies in advance of any approval, in order to adequately review and provide input. Approvals may occur during meetings, or via email/fax/phone. Refer to your *Board Bylaws* on methods of approval.

Ultimately, You're Accountable For:

- Reviewing and approving the above major policies, and ensuring that your approvals are documented in the meeting minutes.

You Can Learn More:

- Head Start Act 642 (c)(1)(E)(i-iv)