




Interoffice Memorandum

April 3, 2023

AGENDA ITEM

TO: Mayor Jerry L. Demings
-AND-
County Commissioners

THRU: Dr. Tracy Salem, Deputy Director 
Community and Family Services Department

FROM: Sonya L. Hill, Manager
Head Start Division
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SUBJECT: **Consent Agenda Item – April 11, 2023**
Application for Federal Assistance related to Quality Improvement
FY 2022-2023

The Head Start Division requests Board approval of the Application for Federal Assistance related to Quality Improvement between the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start and Orange County. The Quality Improvement grant funds in the amount of \$434,720, will be used to provide three new positions; Head Start Mentor Coach, Mental Health Coordinator (Wellness Specialist), and a Training Coordinator; Furniture and Supplies for two Head Start Classrooms, a Sports Utility Vehicle, four Smart Boards/Televisions and funds for training.

ACTION REQUESTED: **Approval of Orange County Head Start Application for Federal Assistance related to Quality Improvement FY 2022-2023 in the estimated amount of \$434,720. Three new positions will be added; Head Start Mentor Coach, Mental Health Coordinator (Wellness Specialist), and a Training Coordinator; Furniture and Supplies for two Head Start Classrooms, a Sports Utility Vehicle, four Smart Boards/Televisions and funds for training. An in-kind waiver is requested.**

SH/smm:ms

Attachments

BCC Mtg. Date: April 11, 2023

Orange County Head Start
Application for Federal Assistance
related to
Quality Improvement FY 2022-2023

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I. Quality Improvement Narrative

Orange County Head Start (OCHS) is requesting to invest Quality Improvement grant funds in the amount of \$434,720 into areas identified as a need based on the self-assessment and program data. The proposed investments will provide ongoing continuous quality improvement of the overall program and support for the staff. OCHS will invest Quality Improvement funds to increase one existing position and add two new positions to the organizational chart. The program will add a Mentor Coach, Wellness Specialist and Training Coordinator. The additional Mentor Coach will give the program a total of three mentor coaches. The Wellness Specialist and Training Coordinator positions will be new to the organization. Funds will also be used to provide classroom furniture, supplies and materials for two new classrooms, a reliable sport utility vehicle or similar, 4 Smart Boards and funds for training and professional development to support the increasing number of new staff. The goal is to utilize the Quality Improvement funds to deal with areas identified as weaknesses, as well as opportunities for improvement.

Mentor Coach

OCHS is requesting \$74,148 in funding to support the Early Childhood and Development & Education unit by adding a Mentor Coach position to the unit. Currently there are two Mentor Coach positions in the organization. Both positions have been filled since the development of the position with no period of vacancy. OCHS has experienced much improvement in teachers' overall success that are assigned and supported by a Mentor Coach. Many of the teacher graduates report happiness and less stress as they are more productive and knowledgeable of the expectations. The Mentor Coach approach is built off the Practice Based Coaching (PBC)

concept and framework. PBC is a proven framework for helping professionals learn and implement these effective practices. Used widely across the U.S. and around the world, PBC is a research-based approach that pairs professionals with coaches in a collaborative partnership; together, they assess the strengths and needs of the mentee and design a plan for implementing effective practices. It is proven that applying evidence-based practices in our daily work is key to achieving goals such as positive developmental and learning outcomes for children.

As recommended by a Practice Based Coaching model, each Mentor Coach should have a maximum of 8 teachers per section or period. Currently the two Mentor Coaches are assigned 12-14 teachers. It is extremely challenging to provide quality and effective advice for the functioning of their duties. Orange County Head Start has a total of 201 teachers of which 85 are teachers and 116 assistants. Currently there are 22 teachers assigned to the two mentor coaches when the maximum for two mentors would be 16. We have 6 teachers above capacity for satisfactory and effective mentoring. These 6 teachers could be advised, directed, and guided by another Mentor Coach if funds were available. Practice-Based Coaching is one of the most effective and evidence-supported professional development approaches for early childhood professionals.

Due to teacher shortages and turnover, OCHS has a growing number of new teachers, and statistically 1 out of 5 new teachers should be assigned a Mentor Coach. In addition to mentoring teachers and assistants, Mentor Coaches assist with data collection, goal setting, environmental settings, modeling, observation, problem solving and constructive feedback.

Mentor Coach Budget Total

Salary	Fringe	Total
\$46,825	\$27,323	\$74,148

Wellness Specialist (Mental & Physical Health Specialist)

In September of 2016, the United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families published the new Head Start Program Performance Standards. In those standards, language was added regarding the mental health and wellness of Head Start staff. Yearly, the Office of Head Start has either provided new program instructions or guidance and resources with expectations for Head Start programs regarding the mental and physical wellness of staff. *Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.93 (a) staff health and wellness states A program must make mental health and wellness information available to staff regarding health issues that may affect their job performance and must provide regularly scheduled opportunities to learn about mental health, wellness, and health education.* Orange County Human Resources Benefits section provides support however, with the level of developing and implementing programs as well as monitoring, aggregating and analyzing staff data, a staff person dedicated to these tasks for Head Start is needed. *Information Memorandum(IM) (ACF-IM-HS-21-05) Supporting the Wellness of All Staff in the Head Start Workforce issued September 27, 2021, provide detail instructions on the expectations of Head Start programs regarding staff wellness.* The IM specifically states, “*Staff wellness should be prioritized as research shows that staff that are happier, healthier, less stressed and experience less depression are able to engage in higher quality interactions with children*”.

Not only does the IM provide guidance it provides strong encouragement for programs to invest dollars such as American Rescue Plan, Cost of Living Adjustments, and quality funding to support the mental wellness and physical health of Head Start staff. In 2020 OCHS created the five-year plan, goal 3 states; ***“Orange County Head Start will enhance the physical health and mental wellness of staff, children, and families by developing a comprehensive wellness approach”***. Over the last two years OCHS has seen the benefits of providing a mental health and wellness support program to staff. Incorporating strategies like Wellness Wednesday, Health Summits during pre-service, Wellness Committee, and enrolling staff in evidence-based training has proven to be extremely successful. A dedicated employee will allow OCHS to produce data that proves the investment has garnered the following results: retained staff, less child/teacher involved incidents/accidents, and higher child outcomes. To continue the momentum, OCHS is requesting \$69,939 to support a Mental Health Coordinator (Wellness Specialist) position for our program.

Mental Health Coordinator (Wellness Specialist) Budget Total

Salary	Fringe	Total
\$43,374	\$26,265	\$69,939

Training Coordinator

The Head Start Program Performance Standards 1302.92 states “a program must establish and implement a systematic approach to staff training and professional development designed to assist staff in acquiring or increasing the knowledge and skills needed to provide high quality, comprehensive services with the scope of their job responsibilities, and attached to an academic credit as appropriate”. In the 2020-2025 five-year strategic plan, goal 1 states;

“Orange County Head Start will be a learning organization in which staff engage in continuous improvement to reach their potential and improve children and family outcomes”

The objective of the goal is to institute a professional development program that will ensure staff training needs are addressed; as well as ensuring compliance with regulatory and programmatic requirements. The program expects outcomes such as all staff including new hires getting the training required to fulfil their job responsibilities, increase, and strengthen education and parent engagement staff’s knowledge in order to ensure that all staff reaches academic achievement, and develop a system that allows the program to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of trainings provided by the program. The program’s self-assessment has focused on professional development as one of the focus areas for the last three years. The program strengths identified included the staff takes numerous trainings related to their roles and responsibilities. However, the tracking and gathering of the data to schedule further training is an area for improvement. A position dedicated to developing and implementing a professional development system that will allow the program to make informed decisions regarding spending training dollars will enhance the program’s ability to become more successful.

Training Coordinator Budget Total

Salary	Fringe	Total
\$46,825	\$27,323	\$74,148

Classroom and Furniture for 2 Classrooms

The OCHS Community Assessment has revealed areas of need are spreading across Orange County. Many of these areas are in an Early Childhood desert. Due to the lack of Early Childhood educational institutions and the need to decrease classroom sizes, OCHS is proposing

to open two new sites. OCHS is currently working with the county's real estate division to locate a new building to open two new classrooms. The current proposal is for one site to be relocated allowing the program to utilize supplies and materials in place. However, there will be a new site that will need two full classrooms, office furniture and supplies and other supporting materials needed for a new site. Therefore, OCHS is requesting \$114,485 in Quality Improvement funds to provide furniture and supplies for the new classrooms.

SUV or Similar

OCHS is requesting \$32,000 in Quality Improvement funds to purchase a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) or similar. Currently, the program has a 2010 Dodge Caravan. Recently, the vehicle has spent more time in our fleet department for repairs than being utilized for the program. Also, the parts to repair are hard to find and expensive due to the age of the vehicle. Recently, our program has had to request a SUV to transport staff to training and events from Orange County fleet division. Content area staff that are constantly completing site visits to conduct monitoring, deliver supplies and provide support are driving up to 15- 20 miles one way placing a great deal of strain on personal vehicles. The vehicle will also be utilized for the purpose of recruitment traveling to the communities to complete outreach and advertising as funding will be allocated to purchase proper signage. The purchase of a vehicle will allow staff to utilize the OCHS vehicle and not placing so much stress on their personal vehicle. We are hoping to purchase a vehicle that is dependable, economical, strong, and responsible with fuel.

OCHS would like to request pre-approval for this vehicle. OCHS would also like to request approval to use State of Florida Contract and/or Orange County Government Contracts to help expedite the procurement process and provide better pricing for this purchase. OCHS is requesting this information is added to the Notice of Award.

4 Smart Boards

OCHS is requesting \$40,000 to purchase smart boards for the OCHS classrooms. In 2020 in developing the five-year strategic plan, goal 4 states; ***“Orange County Head Start will design and build a technology infrastructure that will provide students, families, and staff with access to resources and education to increase children’s achievement of the skills needed to thrive in a globally connected world”***. The goal included a very specific objective to Increase access for students, educators, parents, and other community members to information technology resources that can enhance children’s learning. The expected outcomes include students having more access to learning devices and increasing the amount of learning devices in the classroom environment. All educators will have access to technology and resources and increase staff proficiency in using technology more effectively to enhance children’s learning and business operations. With the American Recovery Plan funds received by our program, OCHS launched a Smart Board pilot program at our Pine Hills Head Start location. Many of our Orange County Public Schools have similar electronic devices which have been successful. These smart boards that were purchased are well maintained and serviced by the County. To-date, a total of eight smart boards have been purchased and installed. During the beginning of the school year, a wish list provided by the Center Managers revealed that for locations without, smartboards was the number one item on the list.

OCHS is requesting \$40,000 to purchase 4 Smart Boards for our Head Start classrooms. Smartboards have proven successful in teaching and engaging students. ***OCHS would also like to request permission to use State of Florida Contracts and/or Orange County Government***

Contracts to help expedite the procurement process and provide better pricing for this purchase. OCHS is requesting this information is added to the Notice of Award.

Additional Training and Training Assistance

OCHS is requesting \$30,000 for training and technical assistance. This is above the funding already allocated as part of the federal award. Post COVID training is being offered more frequently in person, the cost of training and travel has increased over the past year. The cost can make it difficult to send the staff to train, leading to a reduction in the trainings staff can attend. Training space is also a challenge. To host a group training, OCHS often must rent a space, which can be very costly. These funds will help us provide additional training space and provide more meaningful training opportunities to staff for both professional development and wellness.

In-Kind match

OCHS is requesting an In-Kind Waiver for this Quality Improvement Award.