



MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR &
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Sara Bedford,
Director, Human Services Dept.

SUBJECT: Head Start Grant Award

DATE: June 30, 2021

City Administrator
Approval

Date
Jul 1, 2021

INFORMATION

On June 30, 2021, the City of Oakland, Human Services Department, Head Start Program was awarded \$12,252,694 annually by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families, Head Start for the next five years, fiscal years (FY) 2021-26, to serve 622 Oakland families with young children and pregnant women who have the highest need for support. In addition to the City's award, the Unity Council received an independent grant award of approximately \$5,574,000 to serve 368 children in Oakland. Overall, between the two agencies, Oakland will receive approximately \$17,827,000 to serve 990 children and pregnant women citywide. This informational memorandum provides a brief overview of the award, a more detailed report and resolution will be brought to City Council for consideration at the July 20, 2021 meeting.

Background

The City of Oakland has been a grantee for the Head Start Program since 1971, serving Oakland's children and families with comprehensive family and early education supports. The program currently serves 1,006 children and families both directly and in partnership with other agencies.

In 2019, a federal review was conducted that resulted in two deficiency findings that triggered a need to re-compete for the City's next five-year grant for FY 2021-2026. Review findings were positive in classroom practices and fiscal management but deficient in the overall skills and knowledge of the program's management to drive program practices and improvements using required data systems. In July 2019, the Human Services Department hired a new interim director for the program who began implementing the changes necessary to address the findings and improve program services. After a year of intensive work, the Federal Head Start Regional

Office re-reviewed the program in 2020 and all issues were found to be corrected. The Interim Director, who led the programmatic improvements was made a permanent Director in August 2020.

In Fall of 2020, HHS released Head Start funding for the interested entities in Oakland under a Request for Proposals open to competitive bidding. During the reapplication process, the Unity Council, a long-standing partner and delegate agency of the City, made the determination that given its size and current standing as an independent grantee of Head Start (in Contra Costa County) it desired to apply separately. This decision was made in consultation with the City of Oakland and with a commitment to continue to work together to strengthen early childhood programming in Oakland, regardless of the award outcome. The Unity Council in the FY 20-21 program year served as a City of Oakland delegate serving 368 children and families with a contract of \$4,849,972. The City of Oakland Head Start Program applied for the full funding available to the Oakland region which totaled \$17,826,886.

The City of Oakland's application was developed with an emphasis on meeting the pressing needs of Oakland families, driven by that data that shows the most disparate outcomes for Black families, unhoused families, and geographic disparities of access. It was also designed to meet the rapidly changing landscape of early childhood education as the State of California embraces universal Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and all preschool programs will lose enrollment and state funding for 4 year olds. As a result, programs must re-tool to serve younger children (pre-TK) which requires higher teacher ratios, different classroom requirements and other structural changes. The cost to serve children 3 and under is therefore higher than the 4- to 5-year-old program.

City of Oakland Head Start Award and Program Design

The Administration for Children and Families, Head Start, made final award announcements to the City of Oakland on June 30, 2021, indicating an award of \$12,252,694 to serve 622 children and families. There are 330 Early Head Start slots (0–3-year-old) and 292 Head Start slots (4-5-year-old) funded by the grant. The balance of the available funding, \$5.5 million was awarded to the Unity Council to serve 368 children and the two agencies will coordinate and align their implementation strategies to best serve the entire Oakland community.

The City of Oakland award will allow the City's Head Start program to pursue innovative strategies to address equity and meet demands to strengthen the supports for the most vulnerable families and create pathways out of poverty for families and children. Specifically, the grant supports:

- A mobile classroom designed to reach and serve families who are houseless, living on the streets or in shelters, with critical family support, health, and education services – ultimately linking them to full-time care.
- Invests in Family Child Care Centers throughout Oakland, helping them deliver Head Start quality services. This model helps meet the needs of families with non-traditional

working hours, and most importantly invests in largely Black-, and Brown, and women-led businesses, especially in East Oakland where childcare infrastructure is lacking.

- Expands Early Head Start slots which align with the rapidly changing early childhood education landscape in which all 4 year olds will largely be served in OUSD through Transitional Kindergarten.

The new grant further implements critical changes to the management structure that will address and remedy the Federal review findings, including upgrading job requirements for key supervisory staff to include the skills and knowledge necessary for continued program operation across all staff job specifications.

The reduction of grant funding will result in impacts to the City's Head Start staff. On July 1, 2021, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021 and International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE) Local 21 received notification from the Human Resources Department of possible impacts to their members. The specific impacts to staff will be determined following review of and consultation around the terms of the new award.

As required by the Administration for Children and Families, Head Start Program, the Human Services Department will bring a full report and resolution to the July 20, 2021 City Council meeting requesting Council approval to enter into an agreement and accept \$12,252,694 annually in Head Start grant funds for FY 2021-22.

Respectfully submitted,



SARA BEDFORD

Director, Human Services Department

For questions, please contact Sara Bedford, Director, 510-238-6794 or Diveena Cooppan, Head Start Manager, 510-238-3165