



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](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov)

## Program Performance Summary Report

**To: Authorizing Official/Board Chairperson**

Mrs. Carolyn Rentenbach  
Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Inc.  
3963 3 Mile Rd N  
Traverse City, MI 49686 - 9164

**From: Responsible HHS Official**

**Date: 04/19/2022**

**Dr. Bernadine Futrell**  
**Director, Office of Head Start**

From March 14, 2022 to March 17, 2022, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review of the Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Inc. Head Start and Early Head Start programs. This report contains information about the 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, we have found your program meets the requirements of all applicable HSPPS, 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 recipients:

Mr. Desmond Clayton, Acting Regional Program Manager  
Ms. Kerry Baughman, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director  
Ms. Shannon Phelps, Head Start Director  
Ms. Shannon Phelps, Early Head Start Director

## Glossary of Terms

<b>Area of Concern (AOC)</b>	An area for which the agency needs to improve performance. These issues should be discussed with the recipient's Regional Office of Head Start for possible technical assistance.
<b>Area of Noncompliance (ANC)</b>	An area for 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 of correction and possible technical assistance or guidance from the recipient's program specialist. If not corrected within the specified timeline, this status becomes a deficiency.
<b>Deficiency</b>	<p>As defined in the Head Start Act, the term "deficiency" means:</p> <p>(A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff;</li> <li>(ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations;</li> <li>(iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management;</li> <li>(iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter;</li> <li>(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</li> <li>(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;</li> </ul> <p>(B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or</p> <p>(C) an unresolved area of noncompliance.</p>



## Program Management and Quality Improvement

### Program Management

The recipient establishes a management structure consisting of staff, consultants, or contractors who ensure high-quality service delivery; have sufficient knowledge, training, experience, and competencies to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions; and provide regular supervision and support to staff.

### Ongoing Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

The recipient uses data to identify program strengths, needs, and areas needing improvement; evaluate progress toward achieving program goals and compliance with program performance standards; and assess the effectiveness of professional development.

### Program Governance

The recipient maintains a formal structure of program governance to oversee the quality of services for children and families and to make decisions related to program design and implementation.

The policy council is engaged in the direction of the program, including program design and planning of goals and objectives.

## Program Management and Quality Improvement Summary

For over 20 years, Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Inc. has provided Head Start and Early Head Start Services in 10 counties. The recipient offers services to 991 Head Start and Early Head Start children and expectant families. Enrolled children receive services through center-based, home-based, or child care partner options. Partnering with over 50 schools and pre-kindergarten programs allows the recipient to support early learning and meet each family's diverse needs.

The recipient analyzed data to identify program strengths and needs. A funnel-up data collection approach consisted of discussions starting at the center level. The program director and managers collaborated to create data-based action plans designed to make improvements for continued progress toward program goals. This progress included updated policies, procedures, and professional development. The recipient's approach of using data to evaluate and plan services provided oversight and engaged stakeholders from all levels.



## Monitoring and Implementing Quality Education and Child Development Services

### **Alignment with School Readiness**

The recipient's school readiness efforts align 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 recipient's teaching practices intentionally promote progress toward school readiness and provide high-quality learning experiences for children.

### **Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness**

The recipient prepares teachers to implement the curriculum and support children's progress toward school readiness.

### **Home-based Program Services**

The recipient ensures home-based program services provide home visits, and group socialization activities provide high-quality learning experiences.

## Education and Services Summary

Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Inc.'s school readiness efforts were aided by coaching and professional development. The recipient tailored support and training for teachers based on observations and assessment data results. Education coaches reviewed individual reports from assessment systems and created plans to address specific goals with teachers to assist children in meeting benchmarks. The coaches also used program-level data and monitoring reports to support children's instruction. The recipient improved teaching practices by introducing swivel cameras for observation and feedback. These strategies helped strengthen the program's teaching and coaching practices.



## Monitoring and Implementing Quality Health Services

### Child Health Status and Care

The recipient effectively monitors and maintains timely information on children's health status and care including ongoing sources of health care, preventive care, and follow-up.

### Mental Health

The recipient supports a program-wide culture that promotes mental health and social and emotional well-being, and uses mental health consultation to support staff.

### Oral Health and Nutrition

The recipient maintains and monitors for effective oral health practices and nutrition services that meet the nutritional needs and accommodate feeding requirements and allergies.

### Safety Practices

The recipient implements a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments.

### Services to Expectant Families

The recipient provides quality services that facilitate expectant mothers access to health care and provide information to support prenatal, postpartum, maternal, and infant health and emotional well-being.

## Health Services Summary

Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Inc. addressed the nutritional needs of enrolled children and parents through education and community partnerships. Monthly menus for breakfast, lunch, and snacks were created with the assistance of a nutritionist and then shared with parents. To support healthy eating at home, the program offered families monthly nutritional cooking classes. Additionally, the recipient partnered with the University of Michigan food extension program to provide nutritional education and experiences to parents. The recipient had several partnerships with local farmer's markets and grocery stores to offer food vouchers for fresh produce at reduced or no cost to offset families' food costs. Also, collaborations with human service agencies provided children with backpacks of food to take home. The program connected families with resources and supplies to support healthy eating.



## **Monitoring and Implementing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services**

### **Family Well-being**

The recipient collaborates with families to support family well-being, parents' aspirations, and parents' life goals.

### **Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports**

The recipient provides services that strengthen parent-child relationships and support parents in strengthening parenting skills.

### **Family Engagement in Education and Child Development Services**

The recipient provides education and child development services that recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators and encourage parents to engage in their child's education.

## **Family and Community Engagement Services Summary**

Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Inc. created a set of resource guides specific to each of the ten counties it served. Each guide contained resources pertaining to parenting skills, legal assistance, child advocacy, health and child care providers, and essentials such as food, shelter, and transportation. The program collaborated with community-based agencies and the local school district to provide extended child care. These community partnerships helped the recipient connect families with services to meet their needs.



## Monitoring and Implementing Fiscal Infrastructure

### **Budget Planning and Development**

The recipient develops and implements its budget to sustain management, staffing structures, and the delivery of services that support the needs of enrolled children and families.

### **Ongoing Fiscal Capacity**

The recipient plans and implements a fiscal management system that supports the organization's ongoing capacity to execute its budget over time and meet the needs of its organization.

### **Budget Execution**

The recipient's financial management system provides for effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and other assets.

### **Facilities and Equipment**

The recipient complies with application, prior approval, and reporting requirements for facilities purchased, constructed, or renovated with Head Start funds.

## Fiscal Infrastructure Summary

Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Inc.'s fiscal staff and governing board members provided oversight of federal funds and supported program goals. During the budget development process, the recipient engaged its governing bodies to ensure funds were allocated to support service delivery. To strengthen the governing board members' understanding of program finances, the fiscal officer attended meetings to offer assistance and answer questions. During these meetings, the governing board members received detailed financial information to assist with decision-making. The recipient's collaborative approach to managing funds ensured fiscal integrity and alignment between funding and program goals.



## Monitoring ERSEA: Eligibility, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

### Determining, Verifying, and Documenting Eligibility

The recipient enrolls children or expectant mothers who are categorically eligible or who meet defined income-eligibility requirements.

At least 10 percent of the recipient's total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA or the recipient has received a waiver.

### Enrollment Verification

The recipient maintains and tracks enrollment for all participants including expectant mothers.

## ERSEA Summary

Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Inc. worked to ensure adherence to ERSEA policies by providing ongoing training and support to staff. Family services staff and members of the policy council and governing board received annual training on determining eligibility to ensure accuracy in the application processes. The program maintained policies that outlined penalties for falsifying eligibility information. Enrollment and eligibility processes required a three-part verification as a means of oversight. Training staff on ERSEA policies and procedures helped ensure services were offered to eligible children and families with the greatest need.

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