

# Head Start Basics

## Issue Background

**Overview:** Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive child development program that has served low-income children and their families since 1965. Head Start actually consists of two programs: Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS). HS is a comprehensive early childhood development program primarily serving low-income preschool-age children and their families while Early Head Start was established during the 1994 Reauthorization of HS. EHS is a comprehensive early childhood program serving primarily low-income children prenatal to age three, pregnant women, and their families. Funding for the program goes directly from the federal government to local grantees. The federal government provides 80 percent of the yearly cost to operate a HS program, and the remaining 20 percent must come from a “local match” or “in-kind” contributions, which may be in the form of monetary contributions, donations of goods or services, or volunteer hours. HS and EHS programs serve children in families earning income at or below the federal poverty level, which for a family of four in the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia is \$21,200 during fiscal year 2008.

**Grantees and Delegate Agencies:** There are 2,639 grantees and delegate agencies that run 18,145 Head Start and Early Head Start centers (excluding family child care homes) and 49,038 classrooms. Grantees and delegate agencies include:

- Community Action Agencies (32%)
- Public/Private school systems (17%)
- Private/Public Non-Profits, i.e. churches, non-profit hospitals (37%)
- Private/Public For-Profits, i.e. for-profit hospitals (1%)
- Government Agencies (6%)
- Tribal Government or Consortium (7%)

**Children and Pregnant Women Served:** 1,071,697 children and pregnant women were enrolled in HS and EHS programs during the 2006-2007 program year:

- 976,150 in HS and 95,547 in EHS

### Race

- 40% White
- 30% Black or African American
- 18% Unspecified Race
- 5% Bi-Racial or Multi-Racial
- 7% American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and Other

### Ethnicity

- 35% Hispanic or Latino Origin
- 65% Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino Origin

**Average Cost per Child:** \$7,429; \$7,087 for HS and \$10,591 for EHS.

**Funding:** In fiscal year 2008, Head Start was allocated approximately \$6.9 billion – \$6.2 billion for Head Start and \$689 million for Early Head Start, which funds 1,905 HS programs and 734 EHS programs.

**Staff and Volunteers:** There are 214,915 paid HS and EHS staff and 1,373,915 volunteers. Of those volunteers, 911,627 are former or current HS or EHS parents.

### Average Teacher Salary:

- \$21,000 with CDA or state equivalent
- \$23,000 with Associate Degree
- \$27,400 with B.A. degree (average kindergarten teacher salary is \$47,750)

