

Request for a Non Federal Share Waiver

GCCARD Head Start is requesting a waiver for the Head Start preschool/Early Head Start grant for the 2024-2025 year.

Head Start/Early Head Start (05CH012299) Original In-kind amount **\$3,319,815**

52% of the above amount is **\$1,726,304**. Our contribution would be **\$1,593,511**.

The reasons for the request would encompass 3 of the 5 criteria in the Head Start Act Section 640(b)(1)-(5)- lack of community resources, the impact of an unanticipated increase in cost to carry out the program, and impact upon the community if the program is discontinued.

1) Lack of Community Resources

Genesee County enjoyed prosperous times until the downturn of the auto industry in the late 1980's. Thousands of families in Genesee County have lost their jobs and continue to leave the state. The population has declined 5% from 2010 to 2020.

Daily struggles exist for many that have opted to stay in Genesee County. In fact, Genesee County has a higher rate of unemployment, poverty, children in poverty, households receiving public assistance, and childhood food insecurity than the state. Additionally, childhood maltreatment rates are significantly higher than the state, as well.

Community foundations and businesses are making concentrated efforts to revitalize the area, leaving limited resources as in-kind match for Head Start. Entities cannot be depended upon for in-kind, as they are struggling to maintain their own financial viability. In addition, local school districts have had changes that impact the support they can provide for the Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start (EHS) Program.

The COVID-19 pandemic also negatively impacted the generated non-federal share match. Parent and community volunteers were unable to spend time in classrooms due to covid restrictions. Although we have returned to allowing this volunteering, which historically generated a significant amount of non-federal share match, many volunteers are hesitant to return to the classroom setting.

2) Impact of Program Discontinuation

GCCARD Head Start Preschool has been in Genesee County since 1965 and EHS since 1996. While state-funded programs have increased to provide opportunities for four-year-olds within Genesee County, there are no free, center-based opportunities offering comprehensive services for families with children under four years old, other than Head Start Preschool and EHS. Early Head Start center-based children all receive year-round, full school day care. GCCARD Head Start Preschool classrooms also provide full school day care. Families that are working or furthering their education receive priority placement. Alternative (for profit) programs that provide childcare are not only limited in number and capacity, but also require tuition beyond childcare reimbursement rates, making them unaffordable for families that are struggling. Clearly, discontinuation of program funding would negatively impact many families that are attempting to better their lives.

The community partnerships that Head Start has formed through the years will benefit our families' abilities to access the limited resources that are still available to meet their needs. Discontinuation of programming would result in a reduction in early intervention and necessary resources that are essential to a young family's success.

Additional Information:

The proposed grant application for the 2025-2026 year maintains GSRP (Great Start Readiness Program) funding, which will assist in meeting the local match for the program year. GCCARD continues to seek funding and partnership opportunities that will enhance the acquisition of in-kind dollars, while meeting the ever-growing needs of families and children. Specific initiatives include increased implementation of large-scale parent engagement opportunities, a change in parent meeting format to encourage participation, and an expansion of local partnerships to augment non-federal match dollars.

DATE APPROVED

DELRICO LOYD, Chairperson
Genesee County Board of Commissioners