

Request for a Non Federal Share Waiver

GCCARD Head Start is requesting a waiver for the Head Start/Early Head Start grant for the 2025-2026 year.

Head Start/Early Head Start (05CH012299) Original In-kind amount **\$3,571,248**

60% of the above amount is **\$2,142,749**. Our contribution would be **\$1,428,499**.

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 the 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. Local school districts have had changes that impact the support they can provide for the Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start Program, as well.

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

2) Impact of unanticipated increase in cost

There was an unanticipated increase in the cost of benefits, including health care coverage and workman's compensation insurance, as well as supplies and materials necessary to operate programming resulting in the enrollment reduction request. Provision of services to fewer children will consequently result in less non-federal share match generated through volunteer opportunities and homework related to school readiness goals.

3) 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, Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start are the only free programs available that offer comprehensive services for families with young children. Early Head Start center based children all receive year-round, full school day care. GCCARD Head Start Preschool classrooms are also providing full school day care. Families that are working or furthering their education receive priority placement. Alternative (for profit) programs that provide child care are not only limited in number and capacity, but also require tuition beyond child care 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. The grantee is continuously seeking 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 an increase in implementation of large scale parent engagement opportunities, a change in parent meeting format to encourage increased participation, and an increased relationship with local partners/foundations to increase non-federal match dollars.