

One-time Supplemental Funds for Nutrition and Healthy Eating for Head Start Children and Families

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Program Instruction

To: All Head Start Recipients

Subject: One-time Supplemental Funds for Nutrition and Healthy Eating for Head Start Children and Families

Instruction:

This Program Instruction (PI) outlines the process for Head Start grant recipients to request supplemental funds to promote nutrition services and healthy eating for enrolled children and families. The PI is also intended to assist programs in determining allowable uses of funds to meet program needs.

As affirmed in [ACF-OHS-IM-25-03](#), Head Start programs play a critical role in ensuring children and families have access to comprehensive nutrition services and a variety of nutrient-dense food, including whole grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables, while reducing intake of ultra-processed foods and added sugars. Access to healthy foods and other nutrition services help children grow, develop, and learn. Healthy

nutrition is essential for brain development and provides children with the energy needed to stay active and focused throughout the program day. A balanced diet and physical activity help strengthen a child's immune system, reducing the risk of infections and illnesses. They also prevent childhood obesity, which can lead to chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

Some Head Start programs have shared that a lack of funding can be a barrier to improving or expanding their nutrition services and support for healthy eating. In response to this feedback, the Office of Head Start (OHS) is making available this opportunity for one-time supplemental funding. The scope and size of the improvements that programs may want to make to their nutrition services will vary and OHS recognizes it cannot anticipate all circumstances in which these supplemental funds may be needed. Based on recipient feedback on both promising practices for and common barriers to implementing robust nutrition and health services for children and families, this PI provides a non-exhaustive list of allowable uses of funds for programs' consideration.

Examples of Allowable Uses of Supplemental Funds

Head Start programs have many options for integrating creative approaches to nutrition services. The activities outlined below meet the programmatic purposes and goals of the Head Start mission and are allowable under the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements. The following is not a list of required activities, but rather a list of allowable activities that program administrators may consider in addressing the unique circumstances in their communities related to promoting nutrition services and healthy eating. Head Start funds must be used in ways that comply with the Head Start Program Performance Standards (Performance Standards). These Performance Standards emphasize the importance of providing materials, activities, and environments that meet the safety guidelines for young children and consider the age and developmental stage of children. Please note, a multi-disciplinary approach to nutrition and healthy eating may include multiple activities, and the examples of allowable activities listed below are intended to be reflective of non-recurring expenses that would be appropriate uses of one-time supplemental funds. OHS expects that programs leverage multiple sources of funding to support the ongoing provision of comprehensive nutrition services. Under [45 CFR §1302.44\(b\)](#), a program must use funds from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services Child Nutrition programs as the primary source of payment for meal services. Head Start funds may be used to cover those allowable costs not covered by the USDA. Applicants for proposed funding must demonstrate that they have not received duplicative funding for proposed expenses from another federal funding source, including USDA grant programs such as the School Equipment Grant ([National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grants](#)) or the [Patrick Leahy Farm to School program](#). Additionally, applicants must demonstrate that proposed expenses are not duplicative of funds received through the USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Applications should be specifically tied to nutrition and health outcomes for children and families, including enhancing healthy nutrition practices for participating families and children.

- **Food Service Upgrades**

- Modernization of kitchen facilities and related upgrades to ensure safe food preparation and storage, and opportunities to prepare fresh, whole foods on-site.
- Procurement of fresh, locally sourced, and nutritious food items, which may include transportation costs for delivering fresh ingredients to centers.
- Designated breastfeeding spaces, such as lactation rooms and breast milk storage at center-based programs to provide private and sanitary spaces for breastfeeding mothers.
- Programs receiving funding for facility renovations must follow all requirements for recording notices of federal interest as outlined in [45 CFR §1303.46](#).

- **Materials, Supplies, and Equipment**

- Materials and equipment for center-based, home-based, or family child care activities focused on healthy eating, such as cooking demonstration kits or supplies to create community or

- family gardens, greenhouses, and Indigenous seed hubs.
- Commercial-grade appliances (refrigerators and freezers for safe food storage; ovens, stoves, and microwaves for on-site meal preparation; dishwashers for sanitizing utensils and dishes).
- Food preparation tools, cookware and bakeware, and storage containers.
- Sanitation equipment and protective kitchen gear to ensure the safety of staff, children, and families during food preparation and cooking activities.
- Breastfeeding supplies for use in Head Start facilities, such as breast pumps, nursing pads, storage containers, or comfortable nursing chairs for designated breastfeeding spaces specifically designed to encourage breast feeding.
- Gardens or gardening supplies designed to foster farm-to-table strategies and ensure children are exposed to range of healthy food options through educational experiences.
- **Nutrition Education Resources**
 - Development of nutrition and breastfeeding education programming and curricula for children, families, and staff.
 - Training for staff on nutrition and breastfeeding best practices and dietary guidelines, aligned with USDA requirements and targeting improved outcomes for children and families.
 - Workshops, seminars, and community events for families on nutrition, breastfeeding, health, and wellness topics.
 - Healthy food during programming, including meals and snacks for children and families during parent and family engagement activities.
 - Building or enhancing partnerships around health and nutrition with local child care providers or other local resources families use for parenting supports.
- **Non-recurring Personnel Costs**
 - Consultations with specialized staff (such as registered dietitians or nutritionists) to develop and oversee meal plans that meet USDA guidelines and address the specific needs of children, such as special dietary needs, or provide nutrition counseling to families and staff.
 - Staff training and professional development, which may include nutrition education workshops to train staff on the importance of balanced diets and portion control, physical activity, and food safety, and how to prepare healthy meals and snacks efficiently. Staff training could also include sessions with mental health professionals to address emotional and behavioral challenges related to food insecurity or unhealthy eating habits, and provide counseling to children and families on stress management and its impact on nutrition.
 - Consultations with individuals who can promote physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices among children and staff, such as with [I Am Moving, I Am Learning](#), or develop programming that integrate nutrition and wellness into daily routines.
 - Community outreach coordinators to help programs set up partnerships with local farms, food banks, and health organizations to enhance nutrition services and organize events such as cooking classes and nutrition fairs for families.

Funding Requests

Grant recipients should engage in an assessment of programmatic and community nutrition and health needs that considers the immediate, interim, and long-term impacts and associated costs, understanding that one-time funds should be used for non-recurring expenses. If grant recipients pursue one-time supplemental funds to support personnel, for purposes such as those outlined above, we encourage consideration for whether these positions are short-term or if ongoing expenses can be built into program budgets moving forward. Application narratives must clearly delineate which of the following categories of funding are included in the request:

1. Food Service Upgrades
2. Materials, Supplies, and Equipment
3. Nutrition Education Resources

4. Non-recurring Personnel Fees

Each proposed grant activity should have clear timelines for execution and completion. Project completion timelines, including major activities within each phase, need to be clearly stated in the application. For categories 2–4 above, applicants must limit proposed expenses to evidence-based interventions or training. As part of their applications, grant recipients should provide the research and evaluations for the interventions they intend to use and describe how they will maintain fidelity to the model described in the research. Additionally, as mentioned in the section above, applicants for proposed funding must demonstrate that they have not received duplicative funding for proposed expenses from another federal funding source, including USDA grant programs such as the School Equipment Grant ([National School Lunch Program Equipment Assistance Grants](#)) or the [Patrick Leahy Farm to School program](#). Additionally, applicants must demonstrate that proposed expenses are not duplicative of funds received through the USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

Application Instructions

OHS is making funds available for nutrition and health supplements. **We encourage applications to be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, August 22 for the priority deadline. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.** Applications may continue to be considered on a rolling basis after the priority deadline of Friday, August 22, if funds are available.

To be considered, grant recipients must apply for supplemental funds through an application in the Head Start Enterprise System (HSES). Applications should be submitted using the "Supplement – Nutrition" application amendment. Applications submitted for nutrition purposes using a different application type will not be considered for this opportunity. Supplemental applications should include the following:

- SF-424
- SF-424A
- Program Narrative
- Budget Narrative
- Governing Body and Policy Council Approvals (if not possible to include with the application submission, these may be submitted prior to awards being made)

None of the nutrition and health supplemental funds awarded to grant recipients will be included in the calculation of the grant recipient's base grant in subsequent fiscal years. Nutrition and health supplemental funds are not subject to the allocation requirement of [Sec. 640\(a\)](#) of the Head Start Act.

In addition to all the information included in this P.I., grant recipients must also comply with all award terms and conditions.

Funding Considerations

OHS's priority is to promote high-quality nutrition services and healthy eating for enrolled children and families in Head Start programs. Awards will be based on how effectively the proposed model design fits the needs of the community to be served. ACF reserves the right to deny funding to any applicant that is presently designated as "high risk," probationary, or not in good standing, or has been debarred or defunded by any state or federal agency.

Through this funding opportunity, OHS is interested in reaching areas of greatest nutritional needs to facilitate the enhancement of services for families who would most benefit from services. ACF reserves the right to prioritize organizations based on their ability to demonstrate their community's need and provide sustainable approaches toward the ongoing provision of comprehensive nutrition services.

For questions regarding nutrition and healthy eating needs, please contact ohs_policy@acf.hhs.gov. For assistance submitting the application in HSES, contact help@hsesinfo.org or 1-866-771-4737.

We are committed to supporting your program as we work together to promote nutrition and healthy eating for Head Start children and families.

Thank you for your work on behalf of children and families.

/ Captain Tala Hooban /

Captain Tala Hooban
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