

Head Start Governance and Management Responsibilities

Governing Body/Tribal Council Assumes Legal and Fiscal Responsibility for Head Start and the Safeguarding of Federal Funds

Adopt practices to ensure active, independent and informed governance:

- Governing body bylaws
- Procedures for accessing and collecting information
- Written standards of conduct, including conflicts of interest and complaints
- Procedures for selecting Policy Council members
- Advisory committees

Select:

- Delegate agencies and the service areas for such agencies

Establish:

- Procedures and criteria for recruitment, selection, and enrollment

Review:

- All funding applications and amendments
- Results and follow-up activities from federal monitoring

Review and Approve:

- Major policies and procedures, including Self-Assessment, financial audit, and personnel policies
- Progress on implementing the HS grant, including corrective actions
- Major expenditures
- Operating budget
- Selection of auditor
- Actions to correct audit findings

Receive and Use:

- Annual, monthly, and periodic reports*

*Reports that are generated and used by management, then shared with and used by Policy Council and governing body:

- HHS secretary communication
- Financial statements
- Program information summaries
- Enrollment
- USDA
- Financial audit
- Self-Assessment
- Community assessment
- PIR

Policy Council Assumes Responsibility for Head Start Program Direction

Approve and submit to the governing body decisions regarding:

- Activities for parent involvement/engagement
- Program recruitment, selection, and enrollment priorities
- Funding applications/amendments
- Budget planning, including reimbursement and participation in Policy Council activities
- Policy Council bylaws
- Head Start program personnel policies and decisions, including criteria for employment and dismissal of program staff
- Policy Council election procedures
- Recommendations on delegates/service areas

Receive and Use:

- Annual, monthly, and periodic reports*

Take Action:

- Hire/terminate Head Start Director and other lead staff
- Establish impasse procedures

Provide Leadership and Strategic Direction:

- Focus on Self-Assessment
- Develop, plan, and evaluate the Head Start program

Provide Legal Oversight:

- Ensure compliance with federal laws and state, tribal, and local laws

Management Staff Assumes Operating Responsibility for Head Start Day-to-Day Functions

Take action:

- Implement policies
- Develop procedures
- Provide T/TA to governing body and Policy Council
- Supervise staff
- Monitor compliance
- Generate and use annual, monthly, and periodic reports*
- Share reports with Policy Council and governing body*

Head Start Governance and Management Composition Requirements

Governing Body and Tribal Council Assumes Legal and Fiscal Responsibility for Head Start and the Safeguarding of Federal Funds

The governing body is composed of:

- At least one member with a background and expertise in accounting or fiscal management;
- At least one member with a background and expertise in early childhood education and development;
- At least one member who is a licensed attorney familiar with issues that come before the governing body; and
- Additional members who reflect the community to be served, including parents of currently or formerly enrolled children, and are selected for their expertise in education, business administration, or community affairs.

Please note that the Head Start Act does allow for **exceptions** to these composition requirements in certain cases; for further information regarding exceptions and the use of consultants, refer to the Head Start Act [Sec. 642\(c\)\(1\)\(B\)\(v\) and \(vi\)](#).

Policy Council Assumes Responsibility for Head Start Program Direction

The Policy Council is elected by the parents of children who are currently enrolled in the Head Start program.

The Policy Council is composed of:

- Parents of children currently enrolled in the Head Start program (including any delegate agency), who constitute a **majority** of the members of the Policy Council; and
- Members at large of the community served by the Head Start program (including any delegate agency), who may include parents of children who were formerly enrolled in the Head Start program.

Parents of children currently enrolled in all program options must be proportionately represented on established policy groups.

Management Staff Assumes Operating Responsibility for Head Start Day-to-Day Functions

The management staff includes the grantee organization's executive director, chief financial officer, Head Start program director, and key Head Start managers. Because different agencies have different organizational structures, key management staff titles and responsibilities can vary.

Governing body and Tribal Council members should refer to their Head Start program's organizational structure or chart to identify key Head Start managers in their organization.