

Northwest Montana Head Start, Inc.

Annual Report

2015-2016

Northwest Montana Head Start Mission Statement:

Northwest Montana Head Start promotes the well-being and self-sufficiency of children and their whole family by providing opportunities in a nurturing environment.

Northwest Montana Head Start Vision Statement:

Northwest Montana Head Start Board of Directors, Staff, and Parents collaborate with community resources to provide quality services which empower families and advocate for children.

The Northwest Montana Head Start program focus is on strengthening the social, nutritional, emotional, physical, and educational well-being of the whole family.



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Northwest Montana Head Start strives to create positive and fulfilling work environments thereby encouraging continuity of qualified, competent staff.

Introduction:

Northwest Montana Head Start is a comprehensive early childhood program that serves three to five year old children and their families. Children must be three years of age at enrollment and may not turn five by the September cutoff date each year. Ninety percent of families whose children attend Head Start must meet income guidelines. The program provides comprehensive services for its qualifying families including: nutritional, educational, social, health, disability, and parent involvement opportunities. Children with disabilities are also included and receive a variety of additional services such as one-on-one assistance in the classroom, as well as speech, occupation, and physical therapy.

The over-arching focus of the Head Start program is that of quality early childhood development and experiences in order to prepare children when entering kindergarten with the tools they need to be ready to learn and adapt.

Northwest Montana Head Start (NWMTHS) is a single purpose, not-for-profit agency which serves 212 children and their families in the Flathead and northern Lincoln counties of Montana. The funded enrollment of 212 children must be maintained throughout the program year in accordance with federal regulations. Head Start centers are located in the areas of greatest need determined through comprehensive community assessments. During the 2015-2016 program year: Kalispell center accommodated 134 children; the North Valley center, which is located in Columbia Falls, served 60 children; and 18 children attended the Tobacco Valley center, located in the Eureka Elementary School.

Northwest Montana Head Start submits its annual grant application to the Regional Office in Denver. The grant is due 90 days prior to the beginning of the new grant year. The grant year for NWMTHS runs June 1st to May 31st each year. NWMTHS's grant must be submitted yearly to the Regional Office by February 28th. The grant is written in compliance with instruction from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Explanation of Finances

Public Funds:

Northwest Montana Head Start receives its funding through a federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS), the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and the Office of Head Start (OHS). The funding is received by the local program via the Regional Office of Head Start located in Denver, Colorado. This funding includes a basic grant and a training and technical assistance grant. The basic grant funds all of the general program operations (i.e. personnel, health and welfare benefits, materials, supplies, equipment, facilities, etc.) while the training and technical assistance grant is earmarked to support training and technical assistance (i.e. professional development and training for the staff, Board of Directors, and families). The program's 2015-2016 federal budget for operating its basic program was \$1,612,711 and the federal budget for operating its training and technical assistance component was \$23,170; with the largest portion of program funds going towards staff support.

<i>Expenses</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Personnel	\$1,039,680	\$1,041,019	64%
Fringe Benefits	\$199,605	\$188,203	11%
Contractual	\$21,361	\$20,106	1%
Supplies	\$42,700	\$42,006	3%
Training	\$23,170	\$30,497	2%
Other Costs	\$309,365	\$314,050	19%
Total	\$1,635,881	\$1,635,881	100%

Other costs represent line items such as property leases, mortgages, maintenance and repair, equipment, contractual services, utilities, telephone/internet, mileage reimbursement, staff travel, nutrition and food, publications, training, and memberships.

Head Start is reimbursed for food costs and supplies related to food service from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the state's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Reimbursement is based upon the number of meals served to the Head Start children. For FY46, NWMTHS budgeted \$110,000 in reimbursement from the USDA, but actually received \$110,607. USDA policy allows all children enrolled in Head Start to be categorized as "free" providing the highest level of meal reimbursement to the program. NWMTHS depends upon USDA funding to provide high quality nutrition to all enrolled children. The additional funds were used to help pay for the replacement of kitchen equipment used for meal preparation, nutrition staff salaries, and for supplies needed for fall startup.

Private Funds:

NWMTHS receives private funding from the United Way to supplement its public funding. We are very proud to be a United Way Agency within our community. In FY46 the United Way funds received amounted to \$11,256, which were used to pay the cost of one-on-one aides in the classroom for children with special needs and for parent activities. We also receive a grant from the state through the Community Health Center to administer a SafeCare/PAT program for high risk families amounting to \$52,331.

Other Sources of Private Funding Include:

- Donations of \$5192 -- Specified
 - Cooking Matters - \$600
 - Read-To-Me-Daddy literacy program - \$2050
 - ACE State Fund Grant - \$2000
 - Various Other Donations - \$542

Proposed Federal Budget for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 (FY47):

<i>Expenses</i>	<i>Proposed Costs</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Personnel	\$1,062,306	65%
Fringe Benefits	\$203,348	12%
Contractual	\$24,500	1%
Supplies	\$42,700	3%
Training	\$23,170	2%
Other Costs	\$279,857	17%
Total	\$1,635,881	100%

For fiscal year 47 we project to receive \$120,500 towards food costs and supplies related to food service from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the state's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Also, as a United Way agency NWMTHS will receive assistance and funding as it comes available.

Non-Federal Share (In-Kind):

For every dollar Head Start spends we must have a match of 25 cents which is represented by In-Kind contributions. In FY46 our In-Kind budget was \$408,971. Our non-federal share is garnished from donations of cash, time, supplies, mileage, etc. and is given an assigned dollar amount according to federal guidelines, rules, and regulations. We received \$422,910 of In-Kind in FY46.

NWMTHS Program Information for FY46

Annually the program is required to submit comprehensive data via its Program Information Report (PIR) which provides information about the number of children served, staffing, program services and activities, and other areas of importance to national policy making. At the national level, PIR information is used by the ACF to respond to congressional and public inquiries about the Head Start Program. The following information was gathered through the PIR for FY46.

Attendance:

- The program was funded for 212 children. Due to turnover, the program serves more children than funded each year. This year 251 children were served.
- The average monthly attendance was 89%.
- NWMTHS maintained 100% of the 212 funded enrollment slots throughout the program year which ran from September to May.

Eligibility:

Of the 212 children enrolled, 145 of the enrolled children or 68% were income eligible (at or below 100% of the federal poverty line). Ten families had income between 100-130% of the federal poverty line. Twenty-two children and families were receiving public assistance such as TANF, 20 children were in foster care, 46 families were considered homeless, and 8 children were over income. The over income slots were filled by children meeting high risk guidelines, including children with disabilities. Thirty-nine children were enrolled who qualified as a child with a disability. This exceeded the required enrollment criteria that 10% of enrolled children must be identified as a child with a disability.

Health:

Health is one of the comprehensive services of Head Start. This includes physical health, dental health, social/emotional health, as well as nutritional health. Our program works with families to help them establish a “medical home”. Our goal is to ensure that each family has the opportunity to establish a “medical home” which suits their needs. Our staff also works with families to ensure that all children served have the opportunity to enroll in a health insurance program (Medicaid, Healthy Montana Kids, or private insurance).

Of the 212 children enrolled in NWMTHS during the 2015-2016 program year, 98% of the children were up-to-date on their schedule of age-appropriate preventative and primary health care while 90% of the children served were up-to-date on immunizations for their age. Ninety-six percent of enrolled children completed professional dental exams, with 5% of these children receiving follow-up dental treatment. This is a continual area of concern for NWMTHS. We have partnerships with the *Community Health Center* and the pediatric dental clinic *Kalispell KiDDS* to help facilitate the completion of follow-up treatment for children of Head Start.

Disabilities:

Thirty-nine children or 18.4% of the children served at NWMTHS were identified as children with disabilities and had an Individual Education Program (IEP) organized through the school district. Twenty-one of these children had been diagnosed prior to entering Head Start, and 18 were diagnosed during the school year. Nineteen of these children had an IEP under the disability category of Speech and Language, 17 children had an IEP under the disability category of Developmental Delay, and 3 with Autism. In addition 102 children received either Occupational Therapy services, Physical Therapy, and/or Speech and Language Therapy services through private therapists at the Head Start Center.

Education:

The focus of all Head Start classrooms is to provide an educational opportunity for each child which focuses on classroom activities that are appropriate for each individual child’s level of development and prepares them for transitioning into kindergarten. Head Start gives the parents the opportunity to help plan and implement child-centered lessons for each classroom. Screenings and assessment summaries are used to share each child’s developmental growth with their families. Staff team up with parents in setting goals for their children during conferences and home visits a minimum of four times throughout the school year.

Head Start services are provided in a preschool classroom with teachers who are trained in early childhood education. Teachers plan activities for children which bring about growth and development. Each classroom is divided into learning centers, which provide direct hands-on experiences that help children learn. The centers include blocks, dramatic play, toy, games, art, library, discovery, sensory, and music movement. Classroom activities and materials support the development of each child’s emerging language, literacy, and number skills while enhancing reasoning, problem solving, and decision making skills.

Kindergarten Readiness

Northwest Montana Head Start operates 12 classrooms. Throughout the program year, our teaching staff implements the research-based curriculum Opening the World of Learning (OWL) in addition to supplemental curricula which includes Handwriting without Tears and Second Step which further enrichment. These curriculums are used as the framework for an integrated teaching approach which includes social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development. The OWL Curriculum provides a comprehensive view of an appropriate preschool environment complete with suggested ideas and activities for center enrichment.

The successful transition from Head Start to kindergarten is a major focus of NWMTHS. Through partnerships with kindergarten teachers, elementary principals, and parents we strive to make certain each child transitions successfully from Head Start to kindergarten.

NWMTHS’s curriculum helps to ensure that children who leave NWMTHS are ready for kindergarten. Transition activities are carried out with surrounding school districts where the Head Start children will attend kindergarten. These activities include parent training, meetings with

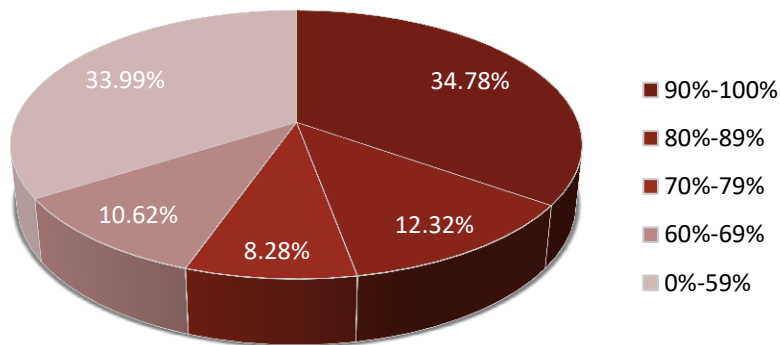
elementary school staff, and visits to kindergarten classrooms. Teacher Advocates meet with families to fill out a transition checklist which offers information on how the parents as well as the Teacher Advocates see the child in terms of going forward to kindergarten. With parent permission these forms, along with information gathered throughout the year through observation and assessment, are shared via transition packets with the receiving school. Transition meetings are also held with the Head Start parent, Head Start Teacher Advocate, Disabilities Manager, school district kindergarten teacher, school principal, and special education teacher to discuss any special needs which must be addressed for children with disabilities.

NWMTHS works closely with Part C (Comprehensive Development Center) and Part B (school district) special education services to ensure that children with disabilities are smoothly transitioned into and out of Head Start and offered the needed services to make such transitions successful.

The program collects data and analyzes children’s progress as part of program outcomes. The goals and objectives cover the Head Start required domain elements and indicators. The 2015-2016 program outcomes are a compilation of outcomes from all NWMTHS classrooms.

Program Performance Outcomes (OWL Average Test Scores)

The OWL assessments are intended to assess the kindergarten readiness of 4 year olds. However all NWMTHS children are assessed regardless of age. The final outcome data reflects scores of all children in the program, including 3 year olds and those with developmental delays.



Head Start Education Requirements for Staff:

The Office of Head Start requires all Head Start teaching staff be trained in Early Childhood Education (ECE). Head Start also requires all teaching staff hold a minimum of an Associate Degree (AA) in Early Childhood Education (ECE). For teachers with elementary or another Bachelor Degree (BA), the requirement is to complete an AA or a minor in ECE.

We currently have 13 Teacher Advocates in our program as well as 14 teacher aides. Below is a table of their qualifications.

<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Teacher Advocate</i>	<i>Teacher Aide</i>
Related BA/BS Degree	1	0
ECE AA Degree	8	0
Elem. Ed. Degree CDA and enrolled in ECE Coursework	4	0
CDA	1	6
Enrolled in CDA Program	0	1
Enrolled in BA Program, Enrolled in CDA program	3	0

Parent Involvement Activities:

Parents are offered the opportunity and encouraged to participate in shared governance as well as various parent activities throughout the year. Active parent involvement is crucial to the program's continued success. Involvement in shared governance includes membership of NWMTHS's Policy Council (PC), where parents elect representatives from each classroom to serve. The PC works closely with management staff and the Board of Directors to assist in program planning and operation. Additionally, parents are involved in each individual center through Parent Center Committee meetings, where monthly meetings are conducted by parents for parents. Trainings and Family Fun Night activities are planned at these monthly meetings and other topics are addressed including: health; nutrition; education; child development; CPR and First Aid; as well as any other issues which may be relevant to parents at the time.

Parents are also very involved in NWMTHS through volunteering in the classroom, participation in health and developmental screenings for their children, and attending program orientation prior to the beginning of classes. Read and Feed activities are also conducted three to four times yearly where families participate in meals, story time, and other reading activities. Each child receives a book at these events to take home and share with their family.

The Read-To-Me-Daddy literacy program completed its second year during the 2015-2016 school year. This program is designed to encourage male figures in the family to make a stronger appearance as a reading role model, while modeling behaviors and teaching skills that will help enhance the value of reading with their children. These events occur continually throughout the year and facilitate children's male figures time to spend with their Head Start child reading a book, while they learn skills which help foster each child's love of reading through activities associated with quality books.

Some highlights of NWMTHS's parent involvement activities which during the 2015-2016 program year included:

- ✓ Family Fun Nights
- ✓ Parent Training Workshops
- ✓ Fatherhood Activities including Read-To-Me-Daddy Events
- ✓ Parent-Teacher Conferences
- ✓ Home-to-School Activities
- ✓ Parent Meetings
- ✓ Home Visits
- ✓ Substituting for Staff
- ✓ Home Visits
- ✓ Classroom Volunteering
- ✓ Component Committee Participation
- ✓ Financial Training Workshops
- ✓ Cooking Matters

ERSEA and Financial Reviews

The Office of Head Start conducted Enrollment, Recruitment, Selection, Eligibility, and Attendance (ERSEA) and Financial reviews of NWMTHS's program the week of May 2nd, 2016. The comprehensive process resulted in no findings for either review. NWMTHS is proud of the systems it keeps in place to provide comprehensive services to children and families.

Financial Audit

An independent auditor's report was conducted by WIPFLI CPAs and Consultants. It was concluded that no material weaknesses were identified with only one minor finding related to an In-Kind miscalculation due to data entry error. Procedures have been established to prevent future errors and all necessary corrections were made.