

July, 2022 Children’s Services Newsletter

In our June Policy Council meeting, the Council was asked to vote on a **Change of Scope for our EHS/HS grant**. (We have three grants (EHS/HS, EHS-CCP, and EHS-Expansion) from the Office of Head Start (OHS), the EHS and HS is our longest running.) What is a Change of Scope and why is it important? A Change of Scope is simply a term used by the OHS when the grantee (WNCSource) is requesting a change from what the awarded grant application contains in regards to program services and any budget implications.

WNCSource is seeking a reduction in the number of funded EHS and or HS children to be served and to retain the current grant funding so that wage increases for Early Head Start and Head Start teaching staff can increase. The wages will increase approximately 5 to 20 percentage and will be based upon education levels.

The enrollment reduction is primarily in our Home Based program with 20 HS slots and 36 EHS slots reduced. A classroom reduction of 40 HS and 8 EHS is also requested. The reduction in Head Start classroom slots are primarily dual HS/NCPREK slots and these slots will now be 100% NC PREK enrolled. The reduction of 8 EHS slots is due to a loss of leased classroom space at the Sugar Hill site. Below is a summary of our requested enrollment changes.

Proposed HS/EHS Funded Enrollment Changes

	HS	EHS
Current funded enrollment	245 (225 center-based; 20 home-based)	164 (104 center-based; 60 home-based)
Proposed funded enrollment	185 (all center-based)	120 (96 center-based; 24 home-based)
Change in slots (number)	-60	-44
Change in slots (percentage)	-24.5%	-26.8%

The enrollment reduction will result in the elimination of nine Children’s Services positions. *It is important to note that these positions are currently vacant/not hired.* The cost savings from the eliminated positions and reduction in other associated costs, such as supplies, will enable and sustain the increase in EHS and HS teaching staff wages.

Another **Change of Scope is being requested for our EHS Child Care Partnership (CCP) grant** to help reduce the number of partnership slots by 20. (Due to OHS vaccine and masks mandates, WNCSource lost one EHS partner in January 2022.) Monies saved from this reduction in slots will help increase the EHS wages of our 6 Fulltime Equivalent (FTE) EHS teachers funded under this grant and give a much needed increase in the per child reimbursement rates to our EHS Child Care Partners.

Both requests for Changes in Scope will go to the WNCSource Board of Directors in July. Assuming their approval, the requests will then be submitted to Region IV Head Start for their review and process.

Timing of a decision from the OHS is uncertain, but we are hopeful for an expedited timeline. Vast majorities of Head Start programs across the nation are undergoing the same staffing shortages and a need to increase wages. Many will be putting forth their own Change in Scope to help meet the challenges as well. With this in mind, the OHS is preparing for a high number of requests in the coming months.

Please stay tuned, we promise to keep you updated with news from the Office of Head Start regarding our requests for Changes in Scope. If approved, this will go a long way in helping us move the needle on what has historically been underpaid wages for early childhood educators and will hopefully, help attract others to a profession that makes an indelible imprint on young lives today and into their future.

Fingers crossed,

Linda Carter

Children's Services Director