

AMENDMENTS

2007—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 110-134, § 13(1), added subsec. (a) and struck out former subsec. (a) which related to employment practices, nonpartisanship, staff accountability, and public access to information.

Subsec. (f)(2). Pub. L. 110-134, § 13(2)(A), added subpar. (A) and redesignated former subpars. (A) to (E) as (B) to (F), respectively.

Subsec. (f)(3). Pub. L. 110-134, § 13(2)(B), struck out “, from the amount reserved under section 9835(a)(2)(A) of this title,” after “financial assistance”.

1998—Subsec. (f)(2). Pub. L. 105-285 substituted “Financial assistance” for “Except as provided in section 9835(a)(3)(C)(v) of this title, financial assistance”.

1994—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 103-252, § 110(1), struck out “guidelines, instructions,” after “all rules, regulations,”.

Subsec. (f)(1). Pub. L. 103-218, § 403(1), inserted “, or to request approval of the purchase (after December 31, 1986) of facilities,” after “to purchase facilities” and inserted at end “The Secretary shall suspend any proceedings pending against any Head Start agency to claim costs incurred in purchasing such facilities until the agency has been afforded an opportunity to apply for approval of the purchase and the Secretary has determined whether the purchase will be approved. The Secretary shall not be required to repay claims previously satisfied by Head Start agencies for costs incurred in the purchase of such facilities.”

Subsec. (f)(2). Pub. L. 103-252, § 110(2)(A), substituted “section 9835(a)(3)(C)(v)” for “section 9835(a)(3)(A)(v)”.

Subsec. (f)(2)(A). Pub. L. 103-218, § 403(2)(A), inserted before semicolon at end “or that was previously purchased”.

Subsec. (f)(2)(C)(i). Pub. L. 103-218, § 403(2)(B)(i), inserted “, or the previous purchase has resulted,” after “purchase will result”.

Subsec. (f)(2)(C)(ii). Pub. L. 103-218, § 403(2)(B)(ii), inserted “, or would have prevented,” after “will prevent” and struck out “and” after semicolon at end.

Subsec. (f)(2)(D), (E). Pub. L. 103-218, § 403(2)(C), (D), added subpar. (D) and redesignated former subpar. (D) as (E).

Subsec. (f)(3). Pub. L. 103-252, § 110(2)(B), added par. (3).

Subsecs. (g), (h). Pub. L. 103-252, § 110(3), added subsecs. (g) and (h).

1992—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 102-401, § 2(j)(1), substituted “Except as provided in subsection (f), no” for “No”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 102-401, § 2(j)(2), substituted “subsections (a) and (f)” for “subsection (a)”.

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 102-401, § 2(j)(3), added subsec. (f). 1990—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 101-501, § 111, inserted “the required” before “non-Federal contributions”.

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 101-501, § 112, added subsec. (e).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-252 effective May 18, 1994, but not applicable to Head Start agencies and other recipients of financial assistance under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.) until Oct. 1, 1994, see section 127 of Pub. L. 103-252, set out as a note under section 9832 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1992 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 102-401 effective Oct. 7, 1992, but not applicable with respect to fiscal years beginning before Oct. 1, 1992, see section 4 of Pub. L. 102-401, set out as a note under section 9835 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-501 effective Oct. 1, 1990, see section 1001(a) of Pub. L. 101-501, set out as a note under section 8621 of this title.

STUDY OF BENEFITS FOR HEAD START EMPLOYEES

Pub. L. 103-252, title I, § 120, May 18, 1994, 108 Stat. 648, provided that:

“(a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall conduct a study regarding the benefits available to individuals employed by Head Start agencies under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.).

“(b) REPORT.—

“(1) PREPARATION.—The Secretary shall prepare a report, containing the results of the study, that—

“(A) describes the benefits, including health care benefits, family and medical leave, and retirement pension benefits, available to such individuals;

“(B) includes recommendations for increasing the access of the individuals to benefits, including access to a retirement pension program; and

“(C) addresses the feasibility of participation by such individuals in the Federal Employees’ Retirement System under chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code.

“(2) SUBMISSION.—The Secretary shall submit the report to the appropriate committees of Congress.”

§ 9840. Participation in Head Start programs**(a) Criteria for eligibility**

(a)(1)(A)¹ The Secretary shall by regulation prescribe eligibility for the participation of persons in Head Start programs assisted under this subchapter.

(B) Except as provided in paragraph (2), such regulation shall provide—

(i) that children from low-income families shall be eligible for participation in programs assisted under this subchapter if their families’ incomes are below the poverty line, or if their families are eligible or, in the absence of child care, would potentially be eligible for public assistance;

(ii) that homeless children shall be deemed to be eligible for such participation;

(iii) that programs assisted under this subchapter may include—

(I) to a reasonable extent (but not to exceed 10 percent of participants), participation of children in the area served who would benefit from such programs but who are not eligible under clause (i) or (ii); and

(II) from the area served, an additional 35 percent of participants who are not eligible under clause (i) or (ii) and whose families have incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line, if—

(aa) the Head Start agency involved establishes and implements outreach and enrollment policies and procedures that ensure such agency is meeting the needs of children eligible under clause (i) or (ii) (or subclause (I) if the child involved has a disability) prior to meeting the needs of children eligible under this subclause; and

(bb) in prioritizing the selection of children to be served, the Head Start agency establishes criteria that provide that the agency will serve children eligible under clause (i) or (ii) prior to serving the children eligible under this subclause;

(iv) that any Head Start agency serving children eligible under clause (iii)(II) shall report annually to the Secretary information on—

(I) how such agency is meeting the needs of children eligible under clause (i) or (ii), in the area served, including local demographic data on families of children eligible under clause (i) or (ii);

¹ So in original. The “(a)” probably should not appear.

(II) the outreach and enrollment policies and procedures established by the agency that ensure the agency is meeting the needs of children eligible under clause (i) or (ii) (or clause (iii)(I) if the child involved has a disability) prior to meeting the needs of children eligible under clause (iii)(II);

(III) the efforts, including outreach efforts (that are appropriate to the community involved), of such agency to be fully enrolled with children eligible under clause (i) or (ii);

(IV) the policies, procedures, and selection criteria such agency is implementing to serve eligible children, consistent with clause (iii)(II);

(V) the agency's enrollment level, and enrollment level over the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the report is submitted;

(VI) the number of children served by the agency, disaggregated by whether such children are eligible under clause (i), clause (ii), clause (iii)(I), or clause (iii)(II); and

(VII) the eligibility criteria category of the children on the agency's waiting list;

(v) that a child who has been determined to meet the eligibility criteria described in this subparagraph and who is participating in a Head Start program in a program year shall be considered to continue to meet the eligibility criteria through the end of the succeeding program year.

(C) In determining, for purposes of this paragraph, whether a child who has applied for enrollment in a Head Start program meets the eligibility criteria, an entity may consider evidence of family income during the 12 months preceding the month in which the application is submitted, or during the calendar year preceding the calendar year in which the application is submitted, whichever more accurately reflects the needs of the family at the time of application.

(2) Whenever a Head Start program is operated in a community with a population of 1,000 or less individuals and—

(A) there is no other preschool program in the community;

(B) the community is located in a medically underserved area, as designated by the Secretary pursuant to section 254c(b)(3)² of this title and is located in a health professional shortage area, as designated by the Secretary pursuant to section 254e(a)(1) of this title;

(C) the community is in a location which, by reason of remoteness, does not permit reasonable access to the types of services described in clauses (A) and (B); and

(D) not less than 50 percent of the families to be served in the community are eligible under the eligibility criteria established by the Secretary under paragraph (1);

the Head Start program in each such locality shall establish the criteria for eligibility, except that no child residing in such community whose family is eligible under such eligibility criteria shall, by virtue of such project's eligibility criteria, be denied an opportunity to participate in

such program. During the period beginning on October 30, 1984, and ending on October 1, 1994, and unless specifically authorized in any statute of the United States enacted after October 30, 1984, the Secretary may not make any change in the method, as in effect on April 25, 1984, of calculating income used to prescribe eligibility for the participation of persons in the Head Start programs assisted under this subchapter if such change would result in any reduction in, or exclusion from, participation of persons in any of such programs.

(3)(A) In this paragraph:

(i) The term "dependent" has the meaning given the term in paragraphs (2)(A) and (4)(A)(i) of section 401(a) of title 37.

(ii) The terms "member" and "uniformed services" have the meanings given the terms in paragraphs (23) and (3), respectively, of section 101 of title 37.

(B) The following amounts of pay and allowance of a member of the uniformed services shall not be considered to be income for purposes of determining the eligibility of a dependent of such member for programs funded under this subchapter:

(i) The amount of any special pay payable under section 310 or 351 of title 37, relating to duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger.

(ii) The amount of basic allowance payable under section 403 of such title, including any such amount that is provided on behalf of the member for housing that is acquired or constructed under the alternative authority for the acquisition and improvement of military housing under subchapter IV of chapter 169 of title 10 or any other related provision of law.

(4) After demonstrating a need through a communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment, a Head Start agency may apply to the Secretary to convert part-day sessions, particularly consecutive part-day sessions, into full-working-day sessions.

(5)(A) Upon written request and pursuant to the requirements of this paragraph, a Head Start agency may use funds that were awarded under this subchapter to serve children age 3 to compulsory school age, in order to serve infants and toddlers if the agency submits an application to the Secretary containing, as specified in rules issued by the Secretary, all of the following information:

(i) The amount of such funds that are proposed to be used in accordance with section 9840a(b) of this title.

(ii) A communitywide strategic planning and needs assessment demonstrating how the use of such funds would best meet the needs of the community.

(iii) A description of how the needs of pregnant women, and of infants and toddlers, will be addressed in accordance with section 9840a(b) of this title, and with regulations prescribed by the Secretary pursuant to section 9836a of this title in areas including the agency's approach to child development and provision of health services, approach to family and community partnerships, and approach to program design and management.

² See References in Text note below.

(iv) A description of how the needs of eligible children will be met in the community.

(v) Assurances that the agency will participate in technical assistance activities (including planning, start-up site visits, and national training activities) in the same manner as recipients of grants under section 9840a of this title.

(vi) Evidence that the agency meets the same eligibility criteria as recipients of grants under section 9840a of this title.

(B) An application that satisfies the requirements specified in subparagraph (A) shall be approved by the Secretary unless the Secretary finds that—

(i) the agency lacks adequate capacity and capability to carry out an effective Early Head Start program; or

(ii) the information provided under subparagraph (A) is inadequate.

(C) In approving such applications, the Secretary shall take into account the costs of serving persons under section 9840a of this title.

(D) Any Head Start agency with an application approved under subparagraph (B) shall be considered to be an Early Head Start agency and shall be subject to the same rules, regulations, and conditions as apply to recipients of grants under section 9840a of this title, with respect to activities carried out under this paragraph.

(b) Establishment of fee schedule or charging of fees; payment by families willing and able to pay

The Secretary shall not prescribe any fee schedule or otherwise provide for the charging of any fees for participation in Head Start programs, unless such fees are authorized by legislation hereafter enacted. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the families of children who participate in Head Start programs and who are willing and able to pay the full cost of such participation from doing so. A Head Start agency that provides a Head Start program with full-working-day services in collaboration with other agencies or entities may collect a family copayment to support extended day services if a copayment is required in conjunction with the collaborative. The copayment charged to families receiving services through the Head Start program shall not exceed the copayment charged to families with similar incomes and circumstances who are receiving the services through participation in a program carried out by another agency or entity.

(c) Availability of more than one year of services; children eligible

Each Head Start program operated in a community shall be permitted to provide more than 1 year of Head Start services to eligible children in the State. Each Head Start program operated in a community shall be permitted to recruit and accept applications for enrollment of children throughout the year.

(d) Indian tribes

(1) An Indian tribe that—

(A) operates a Head Start program;

(B) enrolls as participants in the program all children in the community served by the tribe

(including a community that is an off-reservation area, designated by an appropriate tribal government, in consultation with the Secretary) from families that meet the low-income criteria prescribed under subsection (a)(1)(A); and

(C) has the resources to enroll additional children in the community who do not meet the low-income criteria;

may enroll such additional children in a Head Start program, in accordance with this subsection, if the program predominantly serves children who meet the low-income criteria.

(2) The Indian tribe shall enroll the children in the Head Start program in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary may specify by regulation promulgated after consultation with Indian tribes.

(3) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, an Indian tribe or tribes that operates both an Early Head Start program under section 9840a of this title and a Head Start program may, at its discretion, at any time during the grant period involved, reallocate funds between the Early Head Start program and the Head Start program in order to address fluctuations in client populations, including pregnant women and children from birth to compulsory school age. The reallocation of such funds between programs by an Indian tribe or tribes during a year shall not serve as the basis for the Secretary to reduce a base grant (as defined in section 9835(a)(7) of this title) for either program in succeeding years.

(Pub. L. 97-35, title VI, §645, Aug. 13, 1981, 95 Stat. 504; Pub. L. 98-558, title I, §105, Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 2879; Pub. L. 99-425, title I, §104, Sept. 30, 1986, 100 Stat. 966; Pub. L. 101-501, title I, §§113, 114, Nov. 3, 1990, 104 Stat. 1231; Pub. L. 101-597, title IV, §401(e), Nov. 16, 1990, 104 Stat. 3035; Pub. L. 103-252, title I, §111, May 18, 1994, 108 Stat. 637; Pub. L. 105-285, title I, §112, Oct. 27, 1998, 112 Stat. 2718; Pub. L. 110-134, §14, Dec. 12, 2007, 121 Stat. 1415; Pub. L. 114-328, div. A, title VI, §618(j), Dec. 23, 2016, 130 Stat. 2161.)

Editorial Notes

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 254c of this title, referred to in subsec. (a)(2)(B), was in the original a reference to section 330 of the Public Health Service Act, act July 1, 1944, which was omitted in the general amendment of subpart I (§254b et seq.) of part D of subchapter II of chapter 6A of this title by Pub. L. 104-299, §2, Oct. 11, 1996, 110 Stat. 3626. Sections 2 and 3(a) of Pub. L. 104-299 enacted new sections 330 and 330A of act July 1, 1944, which are classified, respectively, to sections 254b and 254c of this title.

This Act, referred to in subsec. (d)(3), is Pub. L. 97-35, Aug. 13, 1981, 95 Stat. 499, known as the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

AMENDMENTS

2016—Subsec. (a)(3)(B)(i). Pub. L. 114-328 inserted “or 351” after “section 310”.

2007—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 110-134, §14(1)(A), added par. (a)(1) and struck out former par. (1) which related to criteria for eligibility for participation in Head Start programs assisted under this subchapter.

Subsec. (a)(3) to (5). Pub. L. 110-134, §14(1)(B), added pars. (3) to (5).

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 110-134, §14(2), struck out “(age 3 to compulsory school attendance)” after “eligible children”.

Subsec. (d)(3). Pub. L. 110-134, §14(3), added par. (3) and struck out former par. (3) which read as follows: “In providing services through a Head Start program to such children, the Indian tribe may not use funds that the Secretary has determined, in accordance with section 9835(g)(3) of this title, are to be used for expanding Head Start programs under this subchapter.”

1998—Subsec. (a)(1). Pub. L. 105-285, §112(a), substituted “criteria may provide—” for “criteria may provide”, realigned margins of subpars. (A) and (B), in subpar. (B) substituted “shall prescribe, that—” for “shall prescribe, that”, inserted “(i)” before “programs assisted under this subchapter may”, and substituted “subparagraph (A); and”, cl. (ii), and concluding provisions for “clause (A).”

Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 105-285, §112(b), inserted at end “A Head Start agency that provides a Head Start program with full-working-day services in collaboration with other agencies or entities may collect a family copayment to support extended day services if a copayment is required in conjunction with the collaborative. The copayment charged to families receiving services through the Head Start program shall not exceed the copayment charged to families with similar incomes and circumstances who are receiving the services through participation in a program carried out by another agency or entity.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 105-285, §112(c), inserted at end “Each Head Start program operated in a community shall be permitted to recruit and accept applications for enrollment of children throughout the year.”

Subsec. (d)(1)(B). Pub. L. 105-285, §112(d), substituted “a community that is an off-reservation area, designated by an appropriate tribal government, in consultation with the Secretary” for “a community with a near-reservation designation, as defined by the Bureau of Indian Affairs”.

1994—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 103-252, §111(1), substituted “shall be permitted to provide more than 1 year of Head Start services to eligible children (age 3 to compulsory school attendance) in the State.” for “may provide more than one year of Head Start services to children from age 3 to the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the Head Start program is located. The Secretary may not issue or enforce any rule (as defined in section 551(4) of title 5) or guideline that forbids any Head Start agency to carry out a Head Start program in accordance with the authority described in the preceding sentence.”

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 103-252, §111(2), added subsec. (d). 1990—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 101-501, §113, substituted “1994” for “1990” in closing provisions.

Subsec. (a)(2)(B). Pub. L. 101-597 substituted “health professional shortage area” for “health manpower shortage area”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 101-501, §114, inserted at end “The Secretary may not issue or enforce any rule (as defined in section 551(4) of title 5) or guideline that forbids any Head Start agency to carry out a Head Start program in accordance with the authority described in the preceding sentence.”

1986—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 99-425 substituted “1990” for “1986” in closing provisions.

1984—Subsec. (a)(2). Pub. L. 98-558, §105(a), inserted at end “During the period beginning on October 30, 1984, and ending on October 1, 1986, and unless specifically authorized in any statute of the United States enacted after October 30, 1984, the Secretary may not make any change in the method, as in effect on April 25, 1984, of calculating income used to prescribe eligibility for the participation of persons in the Head Start programs assisted under this subchapter if such change would result in any reduction in, or exclusion from, participation of persons in any of such programs.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 98-558, §105(b), added subsec. (c).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1994 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 103-252 effective May 18, 1994, but not applicable to Head Start agencies and other recipients of financial assistance under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.) until Oct. 1, 1994, see section 127 of Pub. L. 103-252, set out as a note under section 9832 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1990 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 101-501 effective Oct. 1, 1990, see section 1001(a) of Pub. L. 101-501, set out as a note under section 8621 of this title.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1986 AMENDMENT

Amendment by Pub. L. 99-425 effective Oct. 1, 1986, see section 1001 of Pub. L. 99-425, set out as a note under section 8621 of this title.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR INDIAN TRIBE OPERATING HEAD START PROGRAM

Pub. L. 118-47, div. D, title II, §238, Mar. 23, 2024, 138 Stat. 681, provided that: “In this fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, notwithstanding the income eligibility requirements of subsections (a) and paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (d) of section 645 of the Head Start Act [42 U.S.C. 9840] and income eligibility criteria and allowances prescribed in regulations, an Indian tribe that operates a Head Start program may, at its discretion, establish selection criteria, including criteria to prioritize children in families for which a child, a family member, or a member of the same household, is a member of an Indian tribe, to enroll children who would benefit from the Head Start program.”

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR AGENCY OPERATING MIGRANT OR SEASONAL HEAD START PROGRAM

Pub. L. 118-47, div. D, title II, §239, Mar. 23, 2024, 138 Stat. 681, provided that: “In this fiscal year and each fiscal year thereafter, notwithstanding the income eligibility requirements of subsection (a) of section 645 of the Head Start Act [42 U.S.C. 9840] and income eligibility criteria and allowances prescribed in regulations, an agency that operates a migrant or seasonal Head Start program may, at its discretion, establish selection criteria to enroll children who would benefit from the Head Start program, giving priority to children of migrant farmworker families: *Provided*, That such selection criteria shall limit that enrollment to children who have at least one family member whose income comes primarily from agricultural employment as defined in section 3 of the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (29 U.S.C. 1802).”

§ 9840a. Early Head Start programs

(a) In general

The Secretary shall make grants to entities (referred to in this subchapter as “Early Head Start agencies”) in accordance with this section for programs (referred to in this subchapter as “Early Head Start programs”) providing family-centered services for low-income families with very young children designed to promote the development of the children, and to enable their parents to fulfill their roles as parents and to move toward self-sufficiency.

(b) Scope and design of programs

In carrying out a program described in subsection (a), an entity receiving assistance under this section shall—

(1) provide, either directly or through referral, early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services that will enhance the physical,