OVERVIEW

Focus Area 2 is an opportunity for grantees to demonstrate their effectiveness in implementing a high-quality program to promote positive outcomes and school readiness for children and their families. This focus area is designed to broaden our understanding of each grantee's performance and to determine if programs are meeting the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

APPROACH

Focus Area 2 involves an on-site review experience, typically a 5-day review. On average, the review team will consist of three reviewers.

On-site activities include conversations with program staff who will share the tools and information they use to monitor program performance. Then, the Reviewer will explore how program staff are supported in providing quality services to children and families.

METHODOLOGY

Document Review

Reviewers will ask to review program data, including: Family Needs Assessment Data – Classroom Assessment Data – Attendance Data – Family Activity Data – Screening Data – Center, Classroom, and Child/Family Data – Data grantee uses this data to understand its progress and performance

Center and Classroom Exploration

Classroom, center, and FCC observations – Conversations with Director, Service Area Managers, Program Staff, Teachers, Governing Body Members, Policy Council Members, and Parents – Facilities exploration

Fiscal Analysis

Conversations with fiscal representative to understand fiscal infrastructure – Fiscal documents for transaction testing

Discussions and Analysis Will Focus on:

PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT

Grantees will demonstrate how the program provides management, ongoing monitoring, and continuous improvement for achieving program goals, ensuring child safety, and ensuring the delivery of effective, high-quality program services.

PROGRESS IN MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTING QUALITY EDUCATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Grantees will demonstrate how the program provides high-quality early education and child development services to a diverse group of families and children, including children with disabilities and dual language learners, to promote children's growth across the areas of development described in the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to 5 and later success in kindergarten.

MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTING QUALITY HEALTH PROGRAM SERVICES

Grantees have the opportunity to share how their program supports, implements, and monitors high-quality health program services that are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate to support children's growth and school readiness. Management staff will share the data they use to monitor the quality of health services and to ensure health, mental health, and dental needs are met in a timely manner. Managers, parents, and staff will be asked to demonstrate how the grantee monitors and maintains healthy and safe facilities and ensures environments for children and families are well maintained and support the desired outcomes for children. Additionally, staff will demonstrate the effectiveness of health and safety practices and discuss how these practices ultimately keep children and families healthy and safe.

PROGRESS IN MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SERVICES

Grantees will demonstrate how their programs integrate family engagement strategies into all systems and provide program services to support family well-being and promote school readiness. Grantees should highlight the intentionality of their family engagement strategies and the ways in which these strategies promote school readiness.

ALIGNED MONITORING SYSTEM 2.0

FY 18 TRAINING SERIES

HEAD START

PROGRESS IN MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTING FISCAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Grantees will showcase their approach to developing their program's annual budget and strategies for the budget's implementation, adjustments, and accountability. Grantees should highlight the intentionality of their program's fiscal capacity and management, as well as the program's approach to sharing information with the director, managers, governing body, and Policy Council, and the ways in which the program uses data to make sound fiscal decisions and ensure fiscal and legal accountability.

ERSEA—ELIGIBILITY AND ATTENDANCE

Grantees will share their strategies for ensuring compliance with ERSEA program requirements. Specifically, the grantee should demonstrate how the program monitors, tracks, analyzes, and uses child attendance data to support families in promoting individual child attendance, and support the program in managing systemic program attendance issues. Grantees will also coordinate child files to enable the Reviewer to monitor that eligible children and families are receiving Head Start services.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. HOW DOES FOCUS AREA 2 FIT INTO AMS 2.0?

Focus Area 1 sets the stage for interpreting a program's performance over time by understanding the foundation for a program's services, management systems, and governance. Focus Area 2 does not exist to validate what was learned in previous reviews, rather it allows the OHS to understand how well grantees have been able to implement the program and how practice and data are driving program improvements and progress toward goals.

2. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF FOCUS AREA 2?

The goal of Focus Area 2 is to acquire a holistic look across service areas and program management functions by observing practice in action. Focus Area 2 allows grantees to demonstrate how well they are working toward or achieving their program goals, how well they know their program's strengths and challenges, and how they address challenges that arise. Reviewers want to see what grantees do every day to manage their program by learning about how their program uses data in real time. Reviewers want to know how grantees support program staff so that they can provide quality services to children and families.

3. WHEN WILL FOCUS AREA 2 REVIEWS OCCUR?

Focus Area 2 Reviews will occur in the second or third year of a grantee's 5-year cycle. In most cases, there will be approximately 1 year between Focus Areas 1 and 2.

4. WHAT IS THE FOCUS AREA 2 REVIEW PROCESS?

Grantee Notification	Reviewer Analysis	Grantee Planning Call	Off-Site Review	Grantee Report
Grantees will be notified prior to their Focus Area 2 Review. Initial notification will be via email	Reviewer connects with the applicable Regional Office to better understand the grantee and reviews program documents	The Review Lead connects with the grantee to plan for the review. Planning includes reviewing the schedule, coordinating observations, and other logistics	The review team (typically three people) travels on site for approximately 5 days. Reviewers will conduct conversations, observations, and review data	Grantee and Regional Office receive a report after Focus Area 2 is complete

AMS²·⁰

FOCUS AREA 2:
Understanding Grantee's Performance and Continuous Program Improvement