

NHSA's Quality Initiative



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION'S

**Program of
Excellence**



NHSA's Vision

To Lead

To be the untiring voice that will not be quiet until every vulnerable child is served with the Head Start model of support for the whole child, the family, and the community.

To Advocate

To work diligently for policy changes that ensure all vulnerable children and families have what they need to succeed.

NHSA's Mission



To coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

We are compelled to fulfill this mission by the promise of all possible outcomes:

- One powerful, united Head Start voice
- A collegial, collaborative Head Start field
- Nonpartisan support of an increased federal commitment to Head Start
- Healthier, empowered children and families, and stronger, more vibrant communities

Agenda

- Overview of the NHSA Quality Initiative Program
- Why Apply
- How to Apply
- Program Highlights
- Questions



The NHSA Quality Initiative Today

NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION'S

Program *of* Excellence

NHSA defines the mark of quality with a 41-part framework known as the **41 Indicators of Excellence**, which:

- reflect established performance criteria;
- extract evidence of the ways your program goes beyond the [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#); and
- describe the best and most effective practices for motivating and helping programs make lasting improvements in their services to children and families

What is the NHSA Quality Initiative?

The NHSA Quality Initiative: Head Start Performance Excellence and Quality Recognition Program recognizes and supports the outstanding performance of Head Start grant recipients across the country.

This designation is earned by programs that consistently demonstrate excellence in program management and service performance and continually support the achievement of robust outcomes for children birth to five years old, pregnant people, families, and the communities where they live.



History: Quality Matters

- Developed in the early 1990's
- Grew out of NHSA's initiatives to improve and highlight program quality
- High quality operations and practices in 10 program areas
- Two Levels: Program of Achievement and Program of Excellence
- First programs awarded in 1995



History: Quality Matters

- Redesigned in 2015 to align NHSA quality indicators and Baldrige Performance Excellence Criteria
- Research, review and analysis of quality models including elected state QRIS systems.
- Feedback obtained from Head Start program directors both participants and non participants of the QI program
- 13 program awarded PoE in 2022



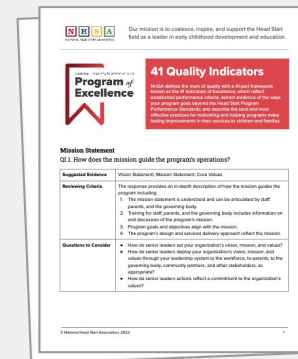
Quality Indicators

Divided into three Quality Indicator sections:

**Organizational
Development**

Engagement

**Program
Enrichment
and
Innovation**



Find the 41 Indicators at:
go.nhsa.org/excellence

Indicator Subsection and Category Example

QI 1. How does the mission guide the program's operations?

Suggested Evidence	Vision Statement, Mission Statement, Core Values
Scoring Criteria	<p>The response provides an in-depth description of how the mission guides the program including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. The mission statement is understood and can be articulated by staff, parents, and the governing body.b. Training for staff, parents, and the governing body includes information on and discussion of the programs mission.c. Program goals and objectives align with the missiond. The programs design and services delivery approach reflect the mission.
Questions to Consider	<p>How do senior leaders set your organization's vision, mission and values?</p> <p>How do senior leaders deploy your organization's vision, mission and values through your leadership system to the workforce, to parents, to the governing body, and other stakeholders, as appropriate?</p> <p>How do senior leaders actions reflect a commitment to the organization's values?</p>

What the Accreditation Means

The three-month application process and virtual meetings gives programs an opportunity to showcase all the facets of their operation:

- leadership; effective and efficient management;
- transparent and sound fiscal stewardship;
- informed, responsible, and responsive program governance;
- genuine partnering with and involvement of parents in all aspects of the program;
- highly experienced and educated staff;
- state-of-the-art programming;
- and quality services that reflect and respond to the aspirations and needs of children and families.



Programs of Excellence continuously strive to improve their performance; build on and exceed goals and achievements; recognize, reward, support, and celebrate staff; and meet children, families, and communities with tailored programming and services.

Benefits of Participation

- A thorough, Head Start-specific organizational evaluation
- Identification of strengths and coaching in areas for continuous improvement.
- Announcement sent to your senators, representatives, and state governor.
- Recognition at NHSA's [National Head Start Conference](#) and in NHSA publications
- Use of the NHSA Program of Excellence Accreditation logo
- Entrance into a community of the best and most innovative educational programs across the country



Rep. Claudia Tenney
@RepTenney



Congratulations to @MVCAA's Head Start program on being accredited as a national Program of Excellence — one of just 13 to receive this distinction from across the country!



Program of Excellence: Children First

June 29, 2022

Children First is a long-standing Head Start Program of Excellence, holding the title for more than two decades.

Application Overview



Program Profile: Using the Program Profile form, all applications must include key profile information about their Head Start/Early Head Start program, including: 1) evidence of Full Compliance with the [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#); 2) evidence of financial integrity and program accountability, including three consecutive years of Independent Audit Reports and the program's most recent [annual report referred to by the Head Start Act](#); and 3) a brief written narrative description below of the families and community served by your program, including family and community strengths and challenges and how your program is meeting these needs.

Demonstration of Innovation: Applicants must submit written narrative responses that thoroughly address how they are meeting the needs of children and families in their program and the needs of their community.

Demonstration of Comprehensive Quality: Applicants must provide written narrative responses that thoroughly address how the program's systems and practices meet or exceed the 41 Indicators of Excellence.

Application and Review Process



- 3 months to complete (February through April)
 - Documents uploaded to The Academy LMS
- Attend all 3 online sessions
- \$3500 application fee
- Professionals with extensive knowledge of and experience in Head Start and Early Head Start will review the application elements and the NHSA Quality Indicators to determine if the program has met the NHSA Quality Initiative criteria.
- The Program of Excellence designation is awarded for a term of 5 years.

Program Support



- Learning Management System (LMS) training
- Narrative template
- Access to quality indicators outside of LMS
- Application Q&A document
- NHSA staff support

Eligibility

- Active and current [NHSA member](#).
- Full compliance with the [Head Start Program Performance Standards](#).
- Program is not currently subject to competition per [1304.11 \(a-g\)](#).
- 25 programs annually



Become an NHSA member at:
nhsa.org/membership

In Their Own Words...

"The [accreditation] has helped our programs focus on our achievements, where we are, and where we wish to go. It has also helped us craft descriptions of various program components, which we now use in program brochures and other promotional tools... Lastly, MSHS **staff has taken pride that they are part of an excellent program**, and this has assisted with maintaining a high level of morale."

–CAPSLO Migrant and Seasonal Head Start



In Their Own Words...

"Salt Lake CAP Head Start applied for the [accreditation] because management and staff believe it is important to run a top-notch agency at all times. Children living in poverty should be able to receive the best services they can and SLCAP Head Start prides ourselves on being a **innovative, creative, fiscally responsible, and a high functioning agency.**"

–Salt Lake CAP Head Start

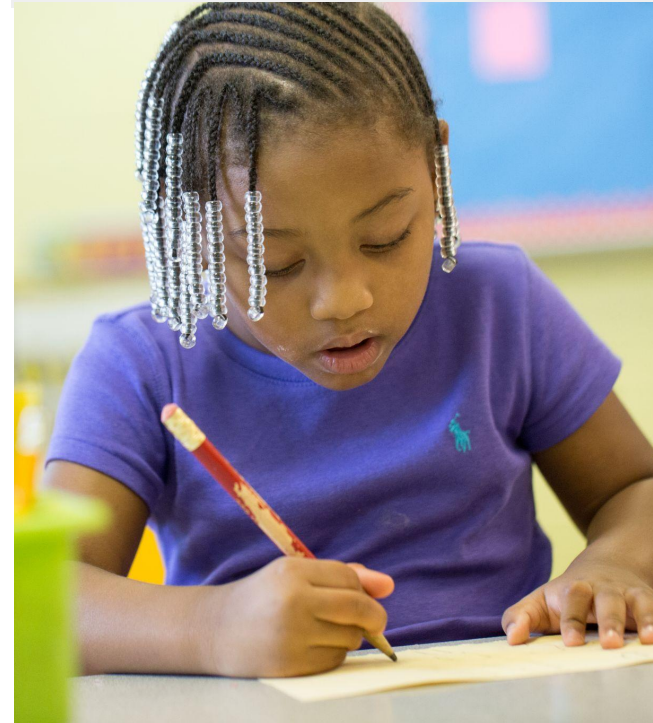


How Do I Apply?



- Spring cohort of 25
- Apply online Eligibility and Application
- Programs will have (3) months to complete the application and attend live sessions
- Responses to the application components will be submitted using an online LMS

Join the waitlist now at go.nhsa.org/excellence





Closing Comments and Questions

Thank you for joining us! For questions and to get started, please contact:

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