Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
June 2026

Federal Updates:

- The Grant/Cooperative Agreement for Grant# 03CH012600-03-00 has been awarded and released.
  Organization: NEW RIVER COMMUNITY ACTION, INC. Grant#: 03CH012600-03-00

- **Action Alert: Submit Comments on the Proposed Head Start Rule**

On May 12, 2026, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the Federal Register titled Restoring Flexibility to Support Head Start Program Access. The proposed rule would rescind significant portions of the 2024 final rule, Supporting the Head Start Workforce and Consistent Quality Programming, which established, for the first time, federal standards requiring Head Start programs to pay competitive wages and provide meaningful benefits to their staff. ACF is accepting public comments on the proposed rule through June 11, 2026. This is a critical opportunity for Head Start programs, staff, families, and advocates to make their voices heard. The federal rulemaking process requires ACF to review and consider all comments received before finalizing any rule — which means your comment matters.

What Does The Proposed Rule Do?

The NPRM proposes to eliminate two sets of requirements added to the Head Start Program Performance Standards by the 2024 final rule:

Wage standards (§ 1302.90(e)) — currently scheduled to take effect August 1, 2031. The 2024 rule required that, by that date, programs must: develop or update a pay scale for all staff; provide education staff with wages comparable to public preschool teachers in their local area; provide all staff with a salary sufficient to cover basic costs of living; and promote wage comparability across Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start settings. The proposed rule would eliminate all of these requirements.

Benefits standards (§ 1302.90(f)) — currently scheduled to take effect August 1, 2028. The 2024 rule required that, by that date, programs must: provide full-time staff with health care coverage, paid leave, and access to behavioral health services; facilitate access to health care coverage for part-time staff; and facilitate access to child care subsidies and student loan forgiveness for eligible staff, with a required reassessment of benefits packages every five years. The proposed rule would eliminate all of these requirements as well.

ACF frames these eliminations as restoring "local flexibility" and estimates the proposed changes would result in "over $2 billion in future cost savings for Head Start programs." NHSA strongly disputes the framing of reduced worker compensation as a "cost savings" — these are not administrative costs, they are the wages and benefits of the teachers, family service workers, and support staff on whom every Head Start program depends.

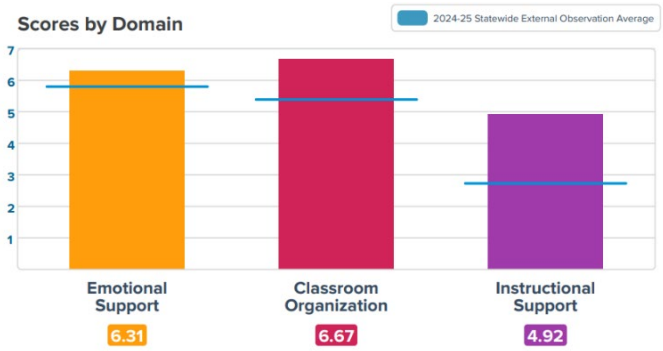
- **Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026) Head Start Funding Increase**-

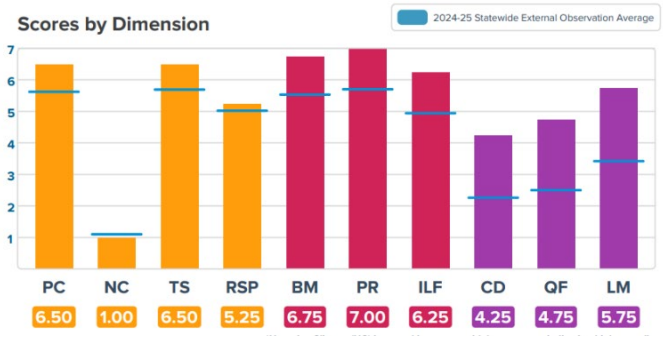
President Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-75), into law on February 3, 2026. The funding level for programs under the Head Start Act (the Act) is $12.375 billion, an increase of $85 million over FY 2025. This funding level provides all Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership grant recipients a 0.635% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

Head Start grant recipients who received funding in FY 2025 are eligible for COLA. Head Start Collaboration Offices are not eligible for COLA funding due to the statutory cap on their funding in the Head Start Act. Each eligible recipient will receive a COLA increase of 0.635% of the FY 2025 base funding level. Base funding excludes training and technical assistance funds and any one-time funding received during FY 2025. Recipients subject to competition for continued funding through the Designation Renewal System (DRS) are entitled to COLA funds through the end of their current award.

State Updates:

- Virginia Quality Rating internal and external Spring CLASS observations completed. I just wanted take a minute to celebrate one of our classrooms in Pulaski, (Holly Duncan) received an additional external CLASS observation this year. Teachstone completed a third external observation because Holly's scores are higher than the state averages. In case you are curious here are her observational scores.





NRCA Program Updates:

Enrollment- We ended the program year at 228. In my July report I will include a detailed report of enrollment at each site and if there is a waitlist. If you know of a child that would benefit from Head Start, applications for Head Start can be found online at the New River Community Action, Inc. webpage or any local public-school website.

Self -Assessment-Our Annual Program Self-Assessment is underway. We will update our 5-year goal progress and review program data to identify the next steps for those goals as well as the effectiveness of our program services to children and families this school year.

Service Area Updates:

- Attachments included this month:
  - Enrollment and Finance Dashboard reports.
- **Recruitment** for 2026-2027 continues. We are completing acceptance meetings and contacting families.
- Transition to kindergarten and End of year Celebrations have concluded.
- Summer Session at the Early Learning Center has begun.
- **Personnel-** Currently we have 4 LT, 2 AT and 3 CSA, 1 Specialist positions open. We do expect those numbers to change after meetings with staff.
- **Facilities** – New flooring has been installed at Fairlawn. Additionally, they have a new sandbox, a small log cabin and school bus being installed on their playground. Pearisburg fencing and playground project has been completed.
- We met our **in-kind contribution match** for the year.
- Alison Harris, Teaching Practices and Coaching Specialist, and I, will be attending the VaHSA Directors conference.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
July 2025

Federal Updates:

Guidelines for Correspondence Subject Headers --We are writing to share important updates to our correspondence practices within HSES. Due to the recent changes to regional points of contact, we need your help to ensure communications are efficiently routed and addressed. (This guidance came with a list of examples for submitting)

Press Release- On Wednesday, July 10, 2025, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a significant policy change by issuing a notice (0991-ZA57) setting forth its revised interpretation of the term "Federal public benefit" as used in Title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), 8 U.S.C. § 1611. HHS rescinded its 1998 interpretation of the term (63 FR 41658) and expanded the agency's interpretation of "Federal public benefit" to include programs, including Head Start and numerous community health-related programs. The notice specifically states that programs serving individuals, households, or families are subject to eligibility restrictions, and in its view, no HHS programs have been formally exempted under PRWORA's limited exceptions.
HHS states that the revised policy takes effect immediately upon publication in the Federal Register but does not alter funding levels. The notice advises that additional verification guidance will be forthcoming, stating that "even if PRWORA and related regulatory activity do not mandate an entity to conduct verification of the immigration status of a person applying for benefits, nothing in the statute prohibits such an entity from conducting verification." We are waiting on additional guidance and official notification.

State Updates:

- We are working with each of the local school systems and Head Start Admin to update our MOUs. This process will be completed by the end of July and will reflect the feedback from the VDOE.
- Mixed Delivery slots at the new Fairlawn site are being filled. If you know of a family needing full day full year childcare for a 3- or 4-year-old please send them our way.

NRCA Program Updates:

Enrollment- Enrollment continues in each jurisdiction. We will have a change of location in Radford, shifting our children from 1B to McHarg. We have a few opening a most of our centers.
We continue to take applications. If you know of a child that would benefit from Head Start, applications for Head Start can be found online at the New River Community Action, Inc. webpage or any local public-school website.
We have begun the transition to close the classrooms outlined in our Change in Scope application.

Professional Development- Family Wellness Coaches met in June and 2 Site Administrators attended the VaHSA Conference with Roni.
Personnel- Our hiring campaign is underway. Currently we have 0 LT, 0 AT and 4 CA and 1 Part-time CSA positions to fill. We have some interviews set up and continue to screen new applicants.
Self -Assessment-Our Annual Program Self-Assessment is underway. I will be meeting with Specialists to talk about/plan for outcomes data to track our 5-year goal progress and MBI reporting.
Annual Report- We are starting to work on our Annual Report to the Public.
Our 2025-2026 **Program Planning Calendars** have been completed.
Pre-Service –We have started planning our annual Pre-Service. August 6th at Claytor Lake. Topics include Health and Safety Practices, Big Five Practices and Program Outcomes and Updates.

There is an updated enrollment dashboard coming soon.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
August 2025

Federal Updates:

HHS Faith Center: Encouraging Early Education Options with Faith Communities' webinar. Here is the key information shared by Dr. Laurie Todd-Smith (ACF Deputy Assistant Secretary of Early Childhood):

Promoting parental choice is a longstanding statutory purpose of CCDF

- Guidance focuses on strategies for CCDF Lead Agencies to help ensure a range of providers are available for eligible families to meet their family needs
- Clarifies CCDF assistance can be used for faith-based child care providers

Provides strategies on how CCDF Lead Agencies may support educational choice for school-age children

- CCDF assistance for before/after-school and wraparound care
- Offer CCDF assistance to homeschooling families for younger children not receiving educational instruction or for care during non-core school hours

Clarifies CCDF cannot be used for education services for students enrolled in grades 1-12

- Flexibility for faith-based providers accepting CCDF vouchers

CCDF Lead Agencies may support CCDF participation for faith-based providers by:

- Offering technical assistance to faith-based providers to help them meet CCDF health and safety standards and states' licensing standards (if applicable)
- Providing grants to providers to offset compliance costs, leveraging CCDF quality improvement funds
- Conducting outreach through religious networks to raise awareness, respecting their autonomy

CCDF flexibility supports parental choice by allowing faith-based providers to care for children in accordance with their beliefs and values

- Faith-based providers are allowed to use CCDF funding for religious purposes or activities, as long as a parent is freely choosing and accessing care through a CCDF certificate or voucher
- Flexibility in hiring requirements – faith-based providers are allowed to require their employees to adhere to religious tenets and teachings

ACF-OHS-IM-25-04: Head Start Alignment with EO 14191 on Expanding Educational Freedom

Encourages Head Start programs to:

- **Actively participate in state/local efforts to coordinate ECE enrollment and services;**
- **Engage families to determine, develop, and improve their program model; and**
- **Re-examine community partnerships to expand family choice, including faith-based options for families**

Action: Request for public comments. **Issue Date Month/Year:** 7/2025
Citation: Federal Register Volume 90, Number 129 (Wednesday, July 9, 2025) Pages 30231–30232
URL: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-07-09/html/2025-12659.htm
Summary: The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Office of Head Start (OHS) is requesting a 3-year extension of the Head Start Program Information Report (PIR), Monthly Enrollment reporting instrument, and Center Locations and Contacts instrument (Office of Management and Budget (OMB) #0970-0427, expiration June 30, 2025). OHS has not made any updates to these instruments.

State Updates:

- **2025 State of the State webinar features a celebration of accomplishments in 2024-2025 and a review of priorities ahead for early childhood in Virginia. The recording and slides have been posted on the VDOE website.**
- **VQB5 Data Verification Now Open through Friday, July 25, 2025.**

NRCA Program Updates:

Enrollment- Enrollment continues in each jurisdiction.

Professional Development- On August 6 Head Start Pre-Service will be held at Claytor Lake. This is an all day professional development on Big 5 Practices provided by Alison Harris, Teaching Practices and Coaching Specialist and Health and Safe Environments trainings offered by the HS Administrative Team.

Personnel- Our hiring campaign is underway. Currently we have 0 LT, 1 AT in Mixed Delivery and 0 CA and 0 FWC positions to fill.

Self -Assessment-Our Annual Program Self-Assessment is underway. I will be meeting with Specialists to talk about/plan for outcomes data to track our 5-year goal progress and MBI reporting.

Service Area Updates:

- Teaching staff are returning to work. They are setting up classrooms, and home visiting with families.
- Family Wellness Coaches continue to complete enrollment visits including scheduling dental appointment and visits to primary care physicians.
- Staff CPR and First Aid training is underway.
- At our Fairlawn Campus Project Grow and Learn we are welcoming new staff for our Mixed Delivery Pre-k program and school age care is getting ready to start August 12th.
- First Day of School:
  - August 13—Margaret Beeks, Floyd Elementary, and McHarg
  - August 18—New River Community College Early Learning Center
  - August 25—Head Start classrooms
  - September 2—Macy McClaugherty (delayed open with Giles County Schools due to school renovations)

Annual Reports Due

- **Self -Assessment**-Our Annual Program Self-Assessment is underway. Submitted in September
- Our **Annual Report to the Public** will be submitted for review in September.
- Program Information Report **"PIR**" is due Aug. 31st.
- **Integrated Service Area Plans and Procedures** will be submitted in September.

There is an updated enrollment dashboard coming soon. We are on track to be fully enrolled in all jurisdictions. Leah and the Site Administrators continue to participate in community events for outreach.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

NRCA Head Start Monthly Enrollment Report - as of August 31, 2025

Enrollment and Attendance

Center	Funded Enrollment	Current Enrollment	# Vacant Slots within 30 days	Average Daily Attendance (August)	Over Income Enrolled for the Year
Blacksburg	17	17		94%	
Christiansburg	34	16/17 (33)		92%	8
Floyd Elem	10	10		81%	
Floyd	16	12		98%	1
HS ELC	17	17		97%	3
Macy	10	*			
Margaret Beeks	9	8		93%	
McHarg	30	14/13 (27)		89%	1
Pearisburg	34	17/17 (34)		99%	
Project G & L	17	2/13 (15)		78%	1
Pulaski	34	34		94%	5
Program Total	228	207		92%	19

Waitlist

Criteria	Homeless	Foster	Public Assistance	Income Eligible		130%		Over Income		2/3	Total	Declined Services
Age	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	4	3	4	3	4	3			
Blacksburg	2	0	1	0	2		1		1	0	7	
Christiansburg		1	2	1			0			1	5	
ELC	1	1		0	1		0		3		6	
Floyd		0		0			0			1	1	
Giles			6						3	2	11	
Project G & L		0	1	0			0				1	
Pulaski		0	4				0	2		1	7	
Radford		0	2	0			0		1		3	
Program Total	3	2	16	1	3	0	1	2	8	5	41	0

Disabilities

Children enrolled with an IEP	10%
Children Referred to LEA (in the process)	
Children Awaiting Services	
Families in NRVCS Case Management Services	57

Comments:

*Macy classrooms did not begin school until 9/2/2025. We are still gathering documentation on IEPS but we have met our 10%

Performance Standards

1302.12(d)(1)(ii)	*Establishes criteria that ensures eligible children are served first*
1302.13	*In order to reach those most in need of services, a program must develop and implement a recruitment process.*
1302.14(b)(1)	*A program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA*
1302.15(a)	*A program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. A program must fill any vacancy within 30 days.*
1302.16(b)	*If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absense rate.*

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
September 2025

Federal Updates:

HHS has agreed to stay enforcement and application through September 10, 2025, of the following item: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA); Interpretation of 'Federal Public Benefit,'" 90 Fed. Reg. 31,232 (July 14, 2025) ("HHS PRWORA Notice"). This period will permit the agency to consider, as appropriate, whether to provide additional information about the HHS PRWORA Notice."

State Updates:

- We continue to participate in the Virginia Quality Rating System and prepare sites for data entry and CLASS observations.
- We are completing meetings with each school system to review MOUs.
- Meetings for Coordinated Enrollment with Ready Regions are beginning.

NRCA Program Updates:

Enrollment- Enrollment at the end of August 208. Macy blended classrooms begin Sept 2. We also have enrolled 3 additional children. Full enrollment and attendance report is attached.

Professional Development- Our next professional development day is scheduled for November 4th. On the agenda so far is extending Big 5 Practices and Service Area meetings.

Personnel- Ups and Downs--Currently we have 3 LT, 0 AT, and 3CSA and 0 FWC positions to fill. The Mixed Delivery classroom is fully staffed.

Self -Assessment-Our Annual Program Self-Assessment is wrapping up. It will be submitted next month for your review.

Service Area Updates:

- Health and Developmental Screenings are beginning.
- Big 5 Practice Observations are ongoing.
- Virtual Fireside chats begin as follow up with Big 5 Practices.
- At our Fairlawn Campus Project Grow and Learn we have added 12 school age students and have
- Teaching staff will participate in a Professional Development Day. September 26th Early Childhood Symposium at Virginia Tech. Our First Baptist center team from last program year has been nominated as Early Childhood Champions of the NRV. Good luck ladies.
- **Integrated Service Area Plans and Procedures** are being updated to reflect any changes identified as part of our self-assessment process.
- Our **Annual Report to the Public** will be submitted for review in October.

Included with this month's report:

- Enrollment and Fiscal Dashboards
- The annual program Information Report **"PIR**"
- Child Outcomes 2024-2025 Periods 1-3
- 5-year Goal Updates

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

NRCA Head Start Monthly Enrollment Report - as of Sept. 30, 2025

Enrollment and Attendance

Center	Funded Enrollment	Current Enrollment	# Vacant Slots within 30 days	Average Daily Attendance (September)	Over Income Enrolled for the Year
Blacksburg	17	16	1	77%	
Christiansburg	34	16/17 (33)	1	88%	8
Floyd Elem	10	10		94%	
Floyd	16	12		93%	1
HS ELC	17	17		86%	3
Macy	10	5/5 (10)		96%	
Margaret Beeks	9	9		97%	
McHarg	30	15/15 (30)		95%	1
Pearisburg	34	17/17 (34)		92%	
Project G & L	17	2/13 (15)		74%	1
Pulaski	34	34		92%	5
Program Total	228	220	2	89%	19

Waitlist

Criteria	Homeless	Foster	Public Assistance	Income Eligible		130%		Over Income		2/3	Total	Declined Services
Age	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	4	3	4	3	4	3			
Blacksburg	2	0	1	0	2		1		1	0	7	
Christiansburg		1	2	1			0			1	5	
ELC	1	1		0	1		0		3		6	
Floyd		0		0			0			1	1	
Giles			6						3	2	11	
Project G & L		0	1	0			0				1	
Pulaski		0	4				0	2		1	7	
Radford		0	2	0			0		1		3	
Program Total	3	2	16	1	3	0	1	2	8	5	41	0

Disabilities

Children enrolled with an IEP	24
Children Referred to LEA (in the process)	13
Children Awaiting Services	
Families in NRVCS Case Management Services	59

Comments:

We have an increase of referrals for case management services. That 59 reported are already receiving services. We have 6 children enrolling and will be at 228 in October.

Performance Standards

1302.12(d)(1)(ii)	*Establishes criteria that ensures eligible children are served first*
1302.13	*In order to reach those most in need of services, a program must develop and implement a recruitment process.*
1302.14(b)(1)	*A program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA*
1302.15(a)	*A program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. A program must fill any vacancy within 30 days.*
1302.16(b)	*If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absense rate.*

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
October 2025

Federal Updates:

ACF new strategic alignment initiative *Strengthening America's Families Through Strategic Focus*
Updates the vision, mission, values, priorities and guiding principles of the office. This shift is to ensure alignment with the Executive Orders for the current administration.

- Priorities within the new strategic alignment initiative include promoting quality early learning environments and improved child outcomes, promoting work and self-sufficiency, supporting family formation, ensuring efficient use of taxpayer dollars, and emphasizing personal responsibility. For more information and to learn about each priority and guiding principle within ACF's new strategic alignment initiative, please visit https://acf.gov/about/acf-vision-mission-values.

Addressing Vacant Slots Due to Chronic Absenteeism in Head Start Programs ACF-OHS-IM-25-06 This IM clarifies when Head Start programs should consider a child's slot vacant after long-term absences, underscores the importance of regular attendance, and offers strategies programs can use to enhance access and participation for children and families. https://headstart.gov/policy/im/acf-ohs-im-25-06

Sec. 641A Standards; Monitoring of Head Start Agencies and Programs This Information Memorandum (IM) explains the monitoring process for fiscal year (FY) 2026, including updates to review formats and when reviews will take place during a grant period. https://headstart.gov/policy/head-start-act/sec-641a-standards-monitoring-head-start-agencies-programs?cid=8c49503be26b595f491661c5faace929

State Updates:

- VKRP, VALS and CLASS observations are beginning.
- Coordinated Enrollment Meetings Continue with Ready Regions. We are looking at this years application being all electric online.

NRCA Program Updates:

Enrollment- Enrollment at the end of September 222. That will be 97%. Full enrollment and attendance report is attached.

Professional Development- Our next professional development day is scheduled for Nov. 4th. This will be a half day training topics include- using data to plan for children and families and a deeper dive into a specific Big 5 or CLASS Practice.

Personnel- Ups and Downs--Currently we have 1 LT, 0 AT, and 2 CSA and 0 FWC positions to fill. The Mixed Delivery classroom is fully staffed. We also have substitutes onboard for Giles, Montgomery and Radford and Floyd.

Service Area Updates:

- Included in my report this month is a handout explaining what the Big 5 Practices are and why the research tells us how the use of those practices can substantially improve and prevent challenging behaviors in classrooms.
- MOUs with our LEA partners are complete. We have been working with Radford City on transportation for 3-year-olds.
- Health and Developmental Screenings are almost complete. We are starting referrals to physicians, LEAs and NRVCS.
- Big 5 Practice Observations are ongoing. We are reviewing observations and BIRs from sites.
- Virtual Fireside chats are continuing each month.
- Family Wellness Coaches are working on Individual Family Partnership goal setting and Teachers will be starting Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences.
- At our Fairlawn Campus Project Grow and Learn we are introducing a new software system, *Brightwheel. Brightwheel* is like GoEngage but will additionally allow us to track family payments.
- Our **2024-2025 Annual Self-Assessment** and **2024-2025 Annual Report** to the **Public** is complete and submitted for your review.

Included with this month's report:

- Enrollment and Fiscal Dashboards

Respectfully Submitted, *Roni Fitch,* Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
November 2025

Federal Updates:

Our USDA CACFP renewal application for FY26 (Oct 1, 2025 - Sept 30, 2026) has been approved.

We are starting to work on the Continuation Grant submissions package.

- Changes and clarifications in Version 4.0:
  - The amount of documentation required from grant recipients, both in the baseline application and the continuation application, has been reduced.
  - The page limit for the application narrative and budget justification has been reduced to 30 pages.
  - Application narratives are no longer required for continuation applications, unless the application includes a Change in Scope request.
  - Where applicable, citations have been updated to reflect the adoption of 2 CFR Part 200.

State Updates:

- VKRP, VALS and CLASS observations are continuing.
- Coordinated Enrollment Meetings Continue with Ready Regions.

NRCA Program Updates:

Enrollment- Enrollment at the end of October 227. Child number 228 will begin this month making us fully enrolled.

Professional Development- Our next professional development day is scheduled for January 6th. Dr. Kristy Castanon, Early Education Specialist, participated in a training with VaHSA for Education Staff this month.

Personnel- Ups and Downs--Currently we have 1 LT, 0 AT, and 3 CSA and 0 FWC positions to fill. We are holding on processing any more substitute applications.

Service Area Updates:

- Next month we will share our Manage By Information (MBI) programs report. This will include services provided to families and staff during the Fall period.
- Virtual Fireside chats are continuing each month.
- Teachers will be starting Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences.
- *Brightwheel* payment system is up and running for Project Grow and Learn.
- *90-day dental and health screening deadlines are approaching.*

Included with this month's report:

- Enrollment and Fiscal Dashboards

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

NRCA Head Start Monthly Enrollment Report - as of Oct. 31, 2025

Enrollment and Attendance

Center	Funded Enrollment	Current Enrollment	# Vacant Slots within 30 days	Average Daily Attendance (October)	Over Income Enrolled for the Year
Blacksburg	17	17		82%	
Christiansburg	34	17/17 (34)		88%	8
Floyd Elem	10	10		95%	
Floyd	16	15		84%	1
HS ELC	17	17		89%	3
Macy	10	5/5 (10)		88%	
Margaret Beeks	9	9		96%	
McHarg	30	15/15 (30)		96%	1
Pearisburg	34	17/17 (34)		88%	
Project G & L	17	2/12 (14)	3	87%	2
Pulaski	34	16/17 (33)	1	89%	5
Program Total	228	223	4	89%	20

Waitlist

Criteria	Homeless	Foster	Public Assistance	Income Eligible		130%		Over Income		2/3	Total	Declined Services
Age	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	4	3	4	3	4	3			
Blacksburg	2	0	1	0	2		1		1	0	7	
Christiansburg		1	2	1			0			1	5	
ELC	1	1		0	1		0		3		6	
Floyd		0		0			0			1	1	
Giles			6						3	2	11	
Project G & L		0	1	0			0				1	
Pulaski		0	4				0	2		1	7	
Radford		0	2	0			0		1		3	
Program Total	3	2	16	1	3	0	1	2	8	5	41	0

Disabilities

Children enrolled with an IEP	23
Children Referred to LEA (in the process)	21
Children Awaiting Services	0
Families in NRVCS Case Management Services	59

Comments:

Child #228 is set to begin in November bringing us to 100% enrollment.

Performance Standards

1302.12(d)(1)(ii)	*Establishes criteria that ensures eligible children are served first*
1302.13	*In order to reach those most in need of services, a program must develop and implement a recruitment process.*
1302.14(b)(1)	*A program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA*
1302.15(a)	*A program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. A program must fill any vacancy within 30 days.*
1302.16(b)	*If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absense rate.*

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
December 2025

Federal Updates:

We received our annual funding guidance letter.

Dear Head Start Grant Recipient:

Your funding application for the upcoming budget period must be submitted by March 1, 2026. The following table reflects the annual funding and enrollment levels available to apply for:

Period of Funding: 06/01/2026 - 05/31/2027

Annual Funding	Head Start
Program Operations	$3,651,918
Training and Technical Assistance	$35,586
Total Funding	**$3,687,504**

Enrollment Levels	Head Start
Federal Funded Enrollment	228

State Updates:

- We completed VKRP, and VALS assessments and CLASS observations.
- Coordinated Enrollment Meetings Continue with Ready Regions. At our previous meeting we reviewed the new electronic application and provided feedback.

NRCA Program Updates: .

Professional Development- Our next professional development day is scheduled for January 6th. Specialists are working on digital training tracks embedded within our Academy Plus site. These trainings will coincide with online office hours where staff may ask questions and provide implementation updates to Specialists.

Personnel- Ups and Downs--Currently we have 0 LT, 0 AT, 3 CSA and 0 FWC positions to fill. We are holding on processing any more substitute applications. The CSA positions currently have completed interviews and applicants are making their way through the hiring process.

Monitoring and Quality – Specialists are continuing to monitor enrollment, attendance, classroom quality, behavior incidents, and referrals as well as safety practices. The management Team will meet on December 17th to review the mid-year data outcomes. The program's Manage by Information "MBI" report will be submitted to you in January and will include Period 1 educational outcomes.

Enrollment- see attached enrollment dashboard for enrollment, waitlists and attendance data**.**

Service Area Updates:

- *The Brightwheel* system is up and running for Project Grow and Learn. Beginning in December we will start to utilize the system for attendance.

Included with this month's report:

- Enrollment and Fiscal Dashboards

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

NRCA Head Start Monthly Enrollment Report - as of Nov. 30, 2025

Enrollment and Attendance

Center	Funded Enrollment	Current Enrollment	# Vacant Slots within 30 days	Average Daily Attendance (November)	Over Income Enrolled for the Year
Blacksburg	17	17		84%	
Christiansburg	34	17/16 (33)	1	87%	8
Floyd Elem	10	10		93%	
Floyd	16	15	1	86%	2
HS ELC	17	17		86%	3
Macy	10	5/5 (10)		92%	
Margaret Beeks	9	9		95%	
McHarg	30	15/15 (30)		92%	1
Pearisburg	34	17/17 (34)		89%	
Project G & L	17	2/15 (17)		85%	3
Pulaski	34	17/17 (34)		93%	5
Program Total	228	226	2	89%	22

Waitlist

Criteria	Homeless	Foster	Public Assistance	Income Eligible		130%		Over Income		2/3	Total	Declined Services
Age	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	4	3	4	3	4	3			
Blacksburg	2	0	2	0	2		1		3	1	11	
Christiansburg	2	1	4	1			0		1	0	9	
ELC	0	0		0	0		0		5		5	
Floyd		0		0	1		0			0	1	
Giles	4		6					1	3	1	15	
Project G & L		0	1	0			0				1	
Pulaski	1	0	9				0	3		0	13	
Radford		0	2	0			0		2	1	5	
Program Total	9	1	24	1	3	0	1	4	14	3	60	0

Disabilities

Children enrolled with an IEP	22
Children Referred to LEA (in the process)	24
Children Awaiting Services	0
Families in NRVCS Case Management Services	59

Comments:

Performance Standards

1302.12(d)(1)(ii)	*Establishes criteria that ensures eligible children are served first*
1302.13	*In order to reach those most in need of services, a program must develop and implement a recruitment process.*
1302.14(b)(1)	*A program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA*
1302.15(a)	*A program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. A program must fill any vacancy within 30 days.*
1302.16(b)	*If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absense rate.*

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
January 2026

Federal Updates:

- The Trump Administration signed Executive Order- Fostering the Future for American Children and Families which aims to modernize the foster care system, enhance support for youth transitioning out of care, and strengthen partnerships with faith-based organizations. All HSCOs have been informed by the Regional Office that this is a priority for Alex Adams (Assistant Secretary for ACF) especially ensuring a pathway for children in foster care to be enrolled in Head Start.
- We are working on the 2026 grant submission award.

State Updates:

- Virginia Quality Rating internal and external Spring CLASS observations are beginning.

NRCA Program Updates: .

Professional Development- Our January 6th professional development included our annual mid-year active supervision training and individualized training tracks for positions. Teaching staff will complete a behavior management training, the teaching staff in Pulaski County will begin a new training sequence "My Music", Site Administrators will be working on their track "Co-regulation or Compliance" which focuses on supporting staff. Family Wellness coaches will begin planning for their mid-year Individualized Family Partnership visits and recruitment. The trainings will be followed up with online office hours where staff may ask questions and provide implementation updates to Specialists.

Personnel- Currently we have 0 LT, 0 AT, 0 CSA and 2 FWC positions to fill.

Monitoring and Quality – The Management Team met December 17th to review our data outcomes progress. The program's Manage by Information "MBI" report including Period 1 educational outcomes is included for your review.

Enrollment- see attached enrollment dashboard for enrollment, waitlists and attendance data**.**

Service Area Updates:

- *The Brightwheel* system is running. We have been reviewing entries for the last 2 months. This has definitely made payments easier for Mixed Delivery parents.
- *ERSEA – We are working on recruitment plans and the single point of entry application with EO.*

Community Project Updates

- **Volunteer Montgomery will be making snowmen for the children during January.**
- **We are working with a scout group on an additional Little Library for our Fairlawn site.**
- **We had some very generous donations for our families before the holidays – All of these donations helped our families have a very happy holiday. Thanks to the support and kindness of Tekniplex in Dublin, Radford First Baptist church, Pearisburg Junior Women's Club, Feeding America SWVa, Food Lion Feeds, Bell Heth Elementary School, Toys for Tots, Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, Friends of Fran, Belmont Church, and several local individuals adopted families or children and a few other businesses.**

Included with this month's report:

- Enrollment and Fiscal Dashboards

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

NRCA Head Start Monthly Enrollment Report - as of Jan. 31, 2026

Enrollment and Attendance

Center	Funded Enrollment	Current Enrollment	# Vacant Slots within 30 days	Average Daily Attendance (January)	Over Income Enrolled for the Year
Blacksburg	17	17		86%	
Christiansburg	34	17/17 (34)		82%	8
Floyd Elem	10	10		96%	
Floyd	16	15	1	86%	2
HS ELC	17	17		90%	3
Macy	10	5/5 (10)		86%	
Margaret Beeks	9	9		82%	
McHarg	30	14/15 (29)	1	79%	1
Pearisburg	34	17/17 (34)		89%	
Project G & L	17	2/13 (15)	2	90%	3
Pulaski	34	16/16 (32)	2	88%	5
Program Total	228	222	6	87%	22

Waitlist

Criteria	Homeless	Foster	Public Assistance	Income Eligible		130%		Over Income		2/3	Total	Declined Services
Age	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	4	3	4	3	4	3			
Blacksburg	2	0	0	0	2		1		3	1	9	
Christiansburg	2	1	4	1			0		1	0	9	
ELC	0	0		0	0		0		5		5	
Floyd		0		0	1		0			0	1	
Giles	4		6					1	3	1	15	
Project G & L		0	1	0			0				1	
Pulaski	1	0	9				0	3		0	13	
Radford		0	2	0			0		2	1	5	
Program Total	9	1	22	1	3	0	1	4	14	3	58	0

Disabilities

Children enrolled with an IEP	32
Children Referred to LEA (in the process)	28
Children Awaiting Services	2
Families in NRVCS Case Management Services	71

Comments:

Performance Standards

1302.12(d)(1)(ii)	*Establishes criteria that ensures eligible children are served first*
1302.13	*In order to reach those most in need of services, a program must develop and implement a recruitment process.*
1302.14(b)(1)	*A program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA*
1302.15(a)	*A program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. A program must fill any vacancy within 30 days.*
1302.16(b)	*If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absense rate.*

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
February 2026

Federal Updates:

- We are working on the 2026 grant submission award.
- Notice of Federal Funding Lapse (FYI)

  Dear Financial Assistance Recipient,

  As you may be aware, there has been a lapse in appropriated federal funds as of February 1, 2026. Because a funding lapse has occurred, please be advised that Administration for Children and Families (ACF) staff, including the Office of Head Start, may not be available to provide normal oversight and administrative support services.

  For all awards received prior to the lapse in funding (including Tribes), you may be able to continue drawing funds during an appropriations lapse. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Payment Management System will remain operational to continue processing drawdown requests, so that payments can be made for your program.

State Updates:

- Virginia Quality Rating internal and external Spring CLASS observations are beginning.

NRCA Program Updates: .

Professional Development- Next steps toward our 5-year wellness goal. Head Start sites will be participating in "Wellbeing at Work" which is a wellness curriculum that strengthens leadership capacity and supports healthy connected communities. When wellness is intentionally supported at the individual and organizational level, people are better able to lead, collaborate and engage meaningfully across roles and responsibilities. *Wellbeing at Work* is a flexible resource that can be used individually, with teams or within an organizational setting.

Personnel- Currently we have 1 LT, 0 AT, 0 CSA and 2 FWC and 1 SA positions to fill. We have completed interviews and the 2 FWC and 1 SA are making their way through the hiring process.

Monitoring and Quality – Specialists are continuing to monitor enrollment, attendance, classroom quality, behavior incidents, and referrals as well as safety practices.

Enrollment- see attached enrollment dashboard for enrollment, waitlists and attendance data**.**

Service Area Updates: .

- ERSEA – We are working on recruitment plans. The single point of entry application with EO is now available on our website.
- Project Warm – On February 13th Head Start students will be able to get a new winter coat through Project Warm with Subaru.
- Assessment Period 2 is ending. Outcomes will be available next month.
- Family Wellness Coaches are starting their mid-year IFPA conferences with families.
- We are closely watching the number of inclement weather days. The Admin Team will meet and discuss plans for make-up days.

Submitted for your review and approval: The Head Start 2026-2027 Continuation grant budget including the T/TA budget. The submission deadline is March 1, 2026.

Included with this month's report:

- Enrollment and Fiscal Dashboards

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

NRCA Head Start Monthly Enrollment Report - as of Feb. 28, 2026

Enrollment and Attendance

Center	Funded Enrollment	Current Enrollment	# Vacant Slots within 30 days	Average Daily Attendance (February)	Over Income Enrolled for the Year
Blacksburg	18	18		82%	
Christiansburg	34	17/17 (34)		86%	8
Floyd Elem	10	10		92%	
Floyd	16	16		84%	2
HS ELC	17	17		80%	3
Macy	10	5/5 (10)		89%	
Margaret Beeks	9	9		93%	
McHarg	30	14/15 (29)	1	91%	1
Pearisburg	34	17/17 (34)		93%	
Project G & L	16	2/14 (16)		79%	3
Pulaski	34	17/17 (34)		91%	5
Program Total	228	227	1	87%	22

Waitlist

Criteria	Homeless	Foster	Public Assistance	Income Eligible		130%		Over Income		2/3	Total	Declined Services
Age	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	4	3	4	3	4	3			
Blacksburg	2	0	0	0	2		1		3	1	9	
Christiansburg	2	1	4	1			0		1	0	9	
ELC	0	0		0	0		0		5		5	
Floyd		0		0	1		0			0	1	
Giles	4		6					1	3	1	15	
Project G & L		0	1	0			0				1	
Pulaski	1	0	9				0	3		0	13	
Radford		0	2	0			0		2	1	5	
Program Total	9	1	22	1	3	0	1	4	14	3	58	0

Disabilities

Children enrolled with an IEP	37
Children Referred to LEA (in the process)	36
Children Awaiting Services	4
Families in NRVCS Case Management Services	74

Comments:

Performance Standards

1302.12(d)(1)(ii)	*Establishes criteria that ensures eligible children are served first*
1302.13	*In order to reach those most in need of services, a program must develop and implement a recruitment process.*
1302.14(b)(1)	*A program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA*
1302.15(a)	*A program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. A program must fill any vacancy within 30 days.*
1302.16(b)	*If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absense rate.*

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
March 2026

Federal Updates:

- We received notification that we have successfully completed our Full Enrollment Initiative plan from OHS. (attached)
- ACF Sub-Regulatory Guidance Update Today, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is taking a significant step to simplify the grant guidance that accompanies ACF funds. Following a comprehensive review of all sub-regulatory guidance, ACF has eliminated approximately 74% of its guidance documents—3,045 documents and 35,781 pages identified as obsolete, duplicative, or no longer applicable. This effort is designed to make federal grant requirements clearer, more transparent, and easier to navigate.
  Importantly, all rescinded documents have been archived and clearly marked as such. They remain publicly accessible for transparency and historical reference, but they no longer constitute active guidance.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, led by Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is pleased to announce the release of the **2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs)**. Head Start programs play an essential role in helping children develop healthy eating habits early in life, and the updated DGAs provide new opportunities to strengthen Head Start nutrition services, promote health, and reduce the risk of chronic disease across the lifespan.
- Grant Recipients and Delegates must review and verify their Child Serving Center data located in the Facilities tab in HSES by Thursday, March 12th.

State Updates:

- Virginia Quality Rating internal and external Spring CLASS observations are continuing.

NRCA Program Updates: .

Recruitment – The single point of entry application can be found online and there is a QR code listed on fliers taking consumers to the website. We are evaluating the number of Mixed Delivery slots to request for next year. Depending on the application information we receive we may keep some MD slots and convert the remaining to HS wrap around. It really is about trying to find the right type of slots based on income eligibility.

Professional Development- We completed our agreement with Discovery Source for our "Wellbeing at Work" curriculum.

Personnel- Currently we have 1 LT, 0 AT, 1 CSA and 0 FWC and 0 SA positions to fill.

Blacksburg Summer Programming – We are working on plans to extend the school year at our Blacksburg location using some grant funding from the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church. This will provide an additional 3 weeks of school transition in July.

Monitoring and Quality – Specialists are continuing to monitor enrollment, attendance, classroom quality, behavior incidents, and referrals as well as safety practices.

Enrollment- see attached enrollment dashboard for enrollment, waitlists and attendance data**.**

Service Area Updates:

- Assessment Period 2 has ended. Outcomes will be available at next month's PPE meeting.
- Our Spring MBI report will be available at next month's PPE meeting.
- Teachers are completing their winter home visits.
- Inclement weather days continue. A letter has gone out to families regarding a plan to add additional time each day to the length of the school day. We should be able to establish the last for students during the first week of April.
- We are working on our end of the year staff and parent surveys.
- The Health Advisory Committee will be meeting and at that meeting we are requesting input regarding mental health service planning and preparation during times of crisis or stressful events. Additionally, we are discussing resources that staff may need while working with parents who may have a child having difficulty sleeping.

Included with this month's report:

- Enrollment and Fiscal Dashboards

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

NRCA Head Start Monthly Enrollment Report - as of Mar. 31, 2026

Enrollment and Attendance

Center	Funded Enrollment	Current Enrollment	# Vacant Slots within 30 days	Average Daily Attendance (March)	Over Income Enrolled for the Year
Blacksburg	18	18		89%	
Christiansburg	34	17/17 (34)		77%	8
Floyd Elem	10	10		92%	
Floyd	16	16		71%	2
HS ELC	17	16	1	79%	3
Macy	10	5/5 (10)		96%	
Margaret Beeks	9	9		88%	
McHarg	30	15/15 (29)		91%	1
Pearisburg	34	17/17 (34)		85%	
Project G & L	16	2/14 (16)		70%	3
Pulaski	34	17/17 (34)		89%	5
Program Total	228	227	1	84%	22

Waitlist

Criteria	Homeless	Foster	Public Assistance	Income Eligible		130%		Over Income		2/3	Total	Declined Services
Age	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	4	3	4	3	4	3			
Blacksburg	2	0	0	0	2		1		3	1	9	
Christiansburg	2	1	4	1			0		1	0	9	
ELC	0	0		0	0		0		5		5	
Floyd		0		0	1		0			0	1	
Giles	4		6					1	3	0	14	
Project G & L		0	1	0			0				1	
Pulaski	1	0	9				0	3		0	13	
Radford		0	0	0			0		2	0	2	
Program Total	9	1	20	1	3	0	1	4	14	3	54	0

Disabilities

Children enrolled with an IEP	38
Children Referred to LEA (in the process)	35
Children Awaiting Services	
Families in NRVCS Case Management Services	75

Comments:

Several students had severe illness for the month of March.

Performance Standards

1302.12(d)(1)(ii)	*Establishes criteria that ensures eligible children are served first*
1302.13	*In order to reach those most in need of services, a program must develop and implement a recruitment process.*
1302.14(b)(1)	*A program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA*
1302.15(a)	*A program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. A program must fill any vacancy within 30 days.*
1302.16(b)	*If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absense rate.*

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
April 2026

Federal Updates:

- The Office of Head Start announces the appointment of Lizbeth Casco White as the Director of the Office of Head Start. Mrs. White will lead the Office of Head Start within the Office of Early Childhood Development. She will provide leadership for the Head Start and Early Head Start programs serving infants, toddlers, and pre-school aged children from low-income families. Most recently, Mrs. White served as Virginia's Deputy Secretary of Labor in Governor Youngkin's administration.
- Melissa Carter will be reconnecting with our program as our T/TA Grantee Specialist.
- ACLU/Head Start Lawsuit Preliminary Injunction Preliminary Injunction issued January 7; The 60 day appeal window passed March 6th. The Administration chose not to challenge the injunction.
- On Capitol Hill FY27 Appropriations NHSA is recommending an increase of $1.91B in FY27 for total Head Start funding of $14.27B

State Updates:

- Virginia Quality Rating internal and external Spring CLASS observations are continuing.

NRCA Program Updates: .

Recruitment – Applications continue to come in. Next steps include meeting with the school systems to sort applications and look at applications in Fairlawn for Mixed Delivery qualifiers.

Professional Development-

- This month Discovery Source will provide an orientation to Site Administrators and Alison Harris as our program facilitators for the "Wellbeing at Work" curriculum.
- The Pulaski centers continue to participate in a music program "Music with Mary"
- We are using some of our T/TA funds to purchase parenting information on healthy habits and training supplies for parents on pyramid model practices.

Personnel- Currently we have 2 LT, 0 AT, 2 CSA and 1 FWC and 0 SA positions to fill.

Summer Programming –

- Blacksburg Summer Transition camp will begin July 7th with classroom setup and family orientations in the first week. Children will attend camp Monday- Thursday 8:30-1:00pm through July.
- Early Learning Center Summer camp will be June 1st – 25th. Monday through Thursday 8:00-3:00pm.
- Project Grow and Learn will continue full day care throughout June, July and August.

Monitoring and Quality – Specialists are continuing to monitor enrollment, attendance, classroom quality, behavior incidents, and referrals as well as safety practices.

Enrollment- see attached enrollment dashboard for enrollment, waitlists and attendance data**.**

Service Area Updates:

- Our Spring MBI report is completed.
- Teachers and Family Wellness Coaches are preparing for Parent Transitional conferences.
- The weather in February and March was very kind to us. Sites have been adding additional time to lengthen the school day and some make up days have been scheduled. We will be able to end the school year as planned. Last day for children is May 20th.
- We are working on our end of the year staff and parent surveys.
- We met with NRVCS to talk about additional services for disaster response as part of our mental health contract.

Included with this month's report:

- Enrollment and Fiscal Dashboards and the Spring MBI.

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

NRCA Head Start Monthly Enrollment Report - as of April 30, 2026

Enrollment and Attendance

Center	Funded Enrollment	Current Enrollment	# Vacant Slots within 30 days	Average Daily Attendance (April)	Over Income Enrolled for the Year
Blacksburg	17	17		92%	
Christiansburg	34	17/17 (34)		84%	8
Floyd Elem	10	10		96%	
Floyd	16	16		86%	2
HS ELC	17	16	1	85%	4
Macy	10	5/5 (10)		97%	
Margaret Beeks	9	9		90%	
McHarg	30	15/15 (29)		87%	1
Pearisburg	34	17/17 (34)		92%	
Project G & L	17	2/15 (17)		71%	3
Pulaski	34	17/17 (34)		89%	5
Program Total	228	227	1	88%	23

Waitlist

Criteria	Homeless	Foster	Public Assistance	Income Eligible		130%		Over Income		2/3	Total	Declined Services
Age	3 or 4	3 or 4	3 or 4	4	3	4	3	4	3			
Blacksburg	2	0	1	0	2		1		3	0	9	
Christiansburg	2	0	4	1			0		1	0	8	
ELC	0	0		0	0		0		4		4	
Floyd		0		0	0		0			0	0	
Giles	4		6					1	3	0	14	
Project G & L		0	1	0			0				1	
Pulaski	1	0	8				0	3		0	12	
Radford		0	0	0			0		2	0	2	
Program Total	9	0	20	1	2	0	1	4	13	0	50	0

Disabilities

Children enrolled with an IEP	
Children Referred to LEA (in the process)	
Children Awaiting Services	
Families in NRVCS Case Management Services	

Comments:

Performance Standards

1302.12(d)(1)(ii)	*Establishes criteria that ensures eligible children are served first*
1302.13	*In order to reach those most in need of services, a program must develop and implement a recruitment process.*
1302.14(b)(1)	*A program must ensure at least 10% of its total funded enrollment is filled by children eligible for services under IDEA*
1302.15(a)	*A program must maintain its funded enrollment level and fill any vacancy as soon as possible. A program must fill any vacancy within 30 days.*
1302.16(b)	*If a program's monthly average daily attendance rate falls below 85 percent, the program must analyze the causes of absenteeism to identify any systematic issues that contribute to the program's absense rate.*

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
May 2026

Federal Updates:

- The 2025-2026 Program Information Report (PIR) is now final and available. You can access the form and related documents in the **Resources Tab in HSES**.

State Updates:

- Class observations have concluded and the timelines for VKRP testing are nearing completion.

NRCA Program Updates: .

Recruitment – Selection and enrollment meetings are scheduled and being completed. We will provide a full report with updates to enrollment next month.

Professional Development-

- This month Discovery Source will provide an orientation to Site Administrators and Alison Harris as our program facilitators for the "Wellbeing at Work" curriculum. "

Personnel- Currently we have several positions to fill including Specialist, Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Classroom Support Aide and Family Wellness Coach we are filling for next program year.

Programming Notes–

- Exciting news at Project Grow and Learn. We will be installing new flooring in June and some additional playground equipment. As our school age services end May 30th, we are elevating the pre-school experience with a new "Landing Zone" play space at the entry. We are hoping that this will encourage more teacher parent interactions each day during drop off and pick up. We are also working on the title for the Mixed Delivery option to better reflect the awesome pre-school experience children are receiving in combination with extended day.
- Exciting news out of Christiansburg- The Wheat paste mural is being installed. Can't wait for you all to see it. Jessica Johnson Site Administrator will be attending some presentations with some students at VT who are presenting ideas for adding play spaces to playgrounds.
- Exciting news out of Pearisburg—The Community Wellness Outreach (CWO) Team at NRVCS are recognizing the Pearisburg Head Start staff as agents of HOPE in the NRV that have a positive impact on community members. Some staff will be attending the May 7th evening of community fellowship dinner.
- Exciting news for Summer Camp—Both the ELC and Blacksburg are preparing for their summer camp experiences.
- End of the Year Celebration schedule:
  - **Giles** May 14 5:00 at Pearisburg Park,
  - **PGL** May 19th at 4:30,
  - **Margaret Beeks** May 27th 10;30 at Nellies Cave Park,
  - **Blacksburg** May 19th at 10:00 at Hand and Hand Park,
  - **Christiansburg** May 20th 1:00,
  - **Floyd** May 20th at 11:00
  - **Pulaski** – May 18 and 19 5:00
  - **ELC—**May 13th 5:00
  - **McHarg –** May 21 and 22 9:30 at Bisset Park

Monitoring and Quality – Specialists are continuing to monitor enrollment, attendance, classroom quality, behavior incidents, and referrals as well as safety practices. We are working on transitioning children to kindergarten or their future pre-school experience.

Enrollment- we are ending the program year at full enrollment 228.

Service Area Updates:

- Recruitment for 2025-2026 continues.
- We are beginning our planning and preparation phase for 2026-2027 administratively.
- We will be adding a more formalized process to crisis response situations to our mental health contract

Included with this month's report:

- Fiscal Dashboard – We met our in-kind match
- Enrollment Report-- attached

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services

Director of Early Childhood and Family Services Report
June 2026

Federal Updates:

- The Grant/Cooperative Agreement for Grant# 03CH012600-03-00 has been awarded and released.
  Organization: NEW RIVER COMMUNITY ACTION, INC. Grant#: 03CH012600-03-00

- **Action Alert: Submit Comments on the Proposed Head Start Rule**

On May 12, 2026, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the Federal Register titled Restoring Flexibility to Support Head Start Program Access. The proposed rule would rescind significant portions of the 2024 final rule, Supporting the Head Start Workforce and Consistent Quality Programming, which established, for the first time, federal standards requiring Head Start programs to pay competitive wages and provide meaningful benefits to their staff. ACF is accepting public comments on the proposed rule through June 11, 2026. This is a critical opportunity for Head Start programs, staff, families, and advocates to make their voices heard. The federal rulemaking process requires ACF to review and consider all comments received before finalizing any rule — which means your comment matters.

What Does The Proposed Rule Do?

The NPRM proposes to eliminate two sets of requirements added to the Head Start Program Performance Standards by the 2024 final rule:

Wage standards (§ 1302.90(e)) — currently scheduled to take effect August 1, 2031. The 2024 rule required that, by that date, programs must: develop or update a pay scale for all staff; provide education staff with wages comparable to public preschool teachers in their local area; provide all staff with a salary sufficient to cover basic costs of living; and promote wage comparability across Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start settings. The proposed rule would eliminate all of these requirements.

Benefits standards (§ 1302.90(f)) — currently scheduled to take effect August 1, 2028. The 2024 rule required that, by that date, programs must: provide full-time staff with health care coverage, paid leave, and access to behavioral health services; facilitate access to health care coverage for part-time staff; and facilitate access to child care subsidies and student loan forgiveness for eligible staff, with a required reassessment of benefits packages every five years. The proposed rule would eliminate all of these requirements as well.

ACF frames these eliminations as restoring "local flexibility" and estimates the proposed changes would result in "over $2 billion in future cost savings for Head Start programs." NHSA strongly disputes the framing of reduced worker compensation as a "cost savings" — these are not administrative costs, they are the wages and benefits of the teachers, family service workers, and support staff on whom every Head Start program depends.

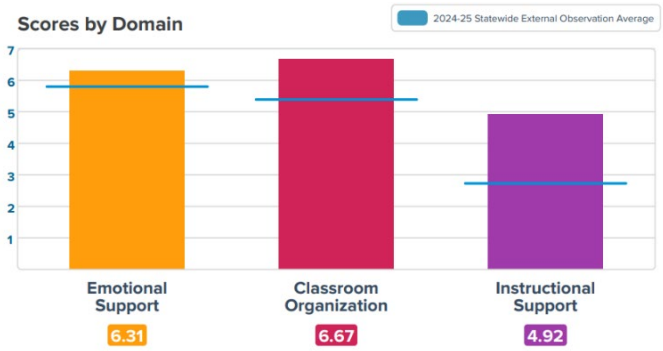
- **Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026) Head Start Funding Increase**-

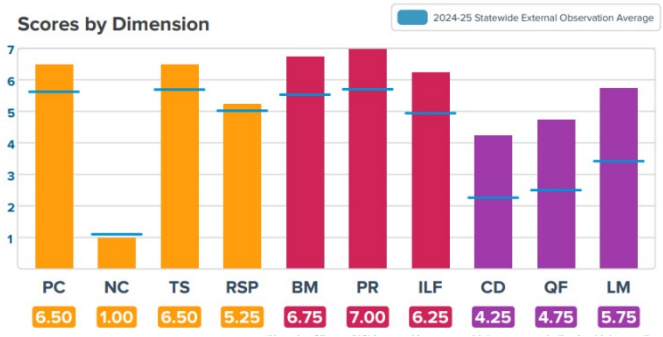
President Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026 (P.L. 119-75), into law on February 3, 2026. The funding level for programs under the Head Start Act (the Act) is $12.375 billion, an increase of $85 million over FY 2025. This funding level provides all Head Start, Early Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership grant recipients a 0.635% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

Head Start grant recipients who received funding in FY 2025 are eligible for COLA. Head Start Collaboration Offices are not eligible for COLA funding due to the statutory cap on their funding in the Head Start Act. Each eligible recipient will receive a COLA increase of 0.635% of the FY 2025 base funding level. Base funding excludes training and technical assistance funds and any one-time funding received during FY 2025. Recipients subject to competition for continued funding through the Designation Renewal System (DRS) are entitled to COLA funds through the end of their current award.

State Updates:

- Virginia Quality Rating internal and external Spring CLASS observations completed. I just wanted take a minute to celebrate one of our classrooms in Pulaski, (Holly Duncan) received an additional external CLASS observation this year. Teachstone completed a third external observation because Holly's scores are higher than the state averages. In case you are curious here are her observational scores.





NRCA Program Updates:

Enrollment- We ended the program year at 228. In my July report I will include a detailed report of enrollment at each site and if there is a waitlist. If you know of a child that would benefit from Head Start, applications for Head Start can be found online at the New River Community Action, Inc. webpage or any local public-school website.

Self -Assessment-Our Annual Program Self-Assessment is underway. We will update our 5-year goal progress and review program data to identify the next steps for those goals as well as the effectiveness of our program services to children and families this school year.

Service Area Updates:

- Attachments included this month:
  - Enrollment and Finance Dashboard reports.
- **Recruitment** for 2026-2027 continues. We are completing acceptance meetings and contacting families.
- Transition to kindergarten and End of year Celebrations have concluded.
- Summer Session at the Early Learning Center has begun.
- **Personnel-** Currently we have 4 LT, 2 AT and 3 CSA, 1 Specialist positions open. We do expect those numbers to change after meetings with staff.
- **Facilities** – New flooring has been installed at Fairlawn. Additionally, they have a new sandbox, a small log cabin and school bus being installed on their playground. Pearisburg fencing and playground project has been completed.
- We met our **in-kind contribution match** for the year.
- Alison Harris, Teaching Practices and Coaching Specialist, and I, will be attending the VaHSA Directors conference.

Respectfully Submitted,

Roni Fitch, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services