

**Worcester Child Development Head Start Program
Worcester Public Schools**



Building A Future For Children And Their Families

2014-2015 Annual Report



Children are likely to live up to what you believe of them.
- Lady Bird Johnson

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Community, Friends, Partners,

The Worcester Child Development Head Start program is proud to present the 2014-2015 Annual Report. This past year our program was presented with a series of funding challenges. From the State 9-C cuts in February that put a halt on all spending, to the Department of Early Education and Care's decision to rescind the FY16 Inclusive Preschool Learning Environments competitive grant in June. Our program has worked tirelessly to uphold quality based services while working with an uncertain budget. If it were not for the commitment and understanding of our staff, families and community, our administration and the program's Policy Council/Board would not have felt as supported as we moved forward in our program decision making. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all who remained committed to our program and its mission throughout these fiscally challenging times.

In spite of these tough financial times, our children and families have made many positive gains and we will continue in our efforts to provide full-day and part-day options to support this positive momentum. Our highly qualified education and disabilities staff have prepared our children with the school readiness skills needed for a successful year in Kindergarten and beyond. Our Nurses, Nutritionist and Dental Hygienists have supported our children and families, ensuring all have access to appropriate health care and nutritional needs. Our Family Service Advocates and Family Engagement Specialists have supported all families as they develop a deeper understanding of ways in which parents and caregivers can support children in their early learning years, and our Secretarial staff have worked to ensure our sites run smoothly and efficiently.

Our commitment to the community we serve has never been stronger. We have partnered with Worcester's Birth to Third Grade Alignment team and we will continue to support and value the strong community connections and collaborations we have within the community that foster success for young children and their families. These partnerships allow us to continue providing the very best programs and resources for the children and the families we serve.

It has been an extraordinary year and we look forward to our 2015-2016 school year. I would personally like to thank the Worcester Public Schools administration, the School Committee, Policy Council/Board, Regional Office staff, the Head Start Management team, staff and families. Fulfillment of our program's mission would not be possible without their commitment, encouragement and support.

Laurie Kuczka
Director

Our Mission

The mission of the Worcester Child Development Head Start Program, Worcester Public Schools, is to provide a high-quality preschool program that prepares children to succeed in tomorrow's world. The program enhances the self-esteem and personal growth of all children including those with special needs while preparing every child to enter school ready to learn. Respectfully building on each family's strengths, goals and role as their child's first teacher, Head Start works in partnership with children, families and the community to promote and advocate for healthy development.

Our Core Values

- Establish a supportive high-quality learning environment for children, parents and staff.
- Understand that the empowerment of families occurs when program governance is a responsibility shared by families, governing bodies and staff.
- Embrace a comprehensive vision of health for children, families and staff.
- Respect the importance of all aspects of an individual's development.
- Build a community in which each child and adult is treated as an individual.
- Foster partnerships and collaborations with the community.
- Develop a continuum of care.

Funding Sources

- Federal (Office of Head Start)
- State – Universal Pre Kindergarten
- State – Inclusionary Preschool Learning Environments
- State – Income Eligible Contract
- State – Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
- State – Head Start State Supplemental

Administrative Staff

Laurie Kuczka, M. Ed <i>Director</i>	Karen Waters, BA <i>Assistant Director</i>
Carlene Sherbourne, M. Ed <i>Education Manager</i>	Maryann Rollings, BS, RN <i>Health Coordinator</i>
Darlene Donaldson, M. Ed <i>Disabilities/Mental Health Coordinator</i>	Linda Jackson <i>Family Engagement/Transportation Specialist</i>
Catalina Delaney, BA <i>Family Services Coordinator</i>	Sarah Petersen <i>Administrative Coordinator</i>

Administrative Office

Taylor Building
770 Main Street
Worcester, MA 01610
508-799-3237 / 508-799-3662

School Locations

Greendale School
130 Leeds Street
Worcester, MA 01606

Mill Swan School (A&B)
337 Mill Street
Worcester, MA 01602

Millbury St. School
389 Millbury Street
Worcester, MA 01610

Short History and Overview

The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program, Worcester Public Schools, is a license exempt preschool program servicing children and families residing in the City of Worcester, Massachusetts. It has been in existence for over 48 years. The focus of the program is to promote school readiness skills of low-income children by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. The program provides learning environments that support children's growth in language, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, physical skills, social and emotional functioning, and approaches to learning. In addition, comprehensive services that focus on health, mental health, special needs support, nutrition, oral health and social services are provided based on individual child and family needs. Families have opportunities to participate in parenting support groups, Adult Education classes, leadership opportunities and other workshops or trainings that support parents/guardians' roles as their children's first teachers. A combination of half-day and full-day services are offered in three buildings located in the city. The program employs over 140 staff and more than 20% are current or former Head Start parents.



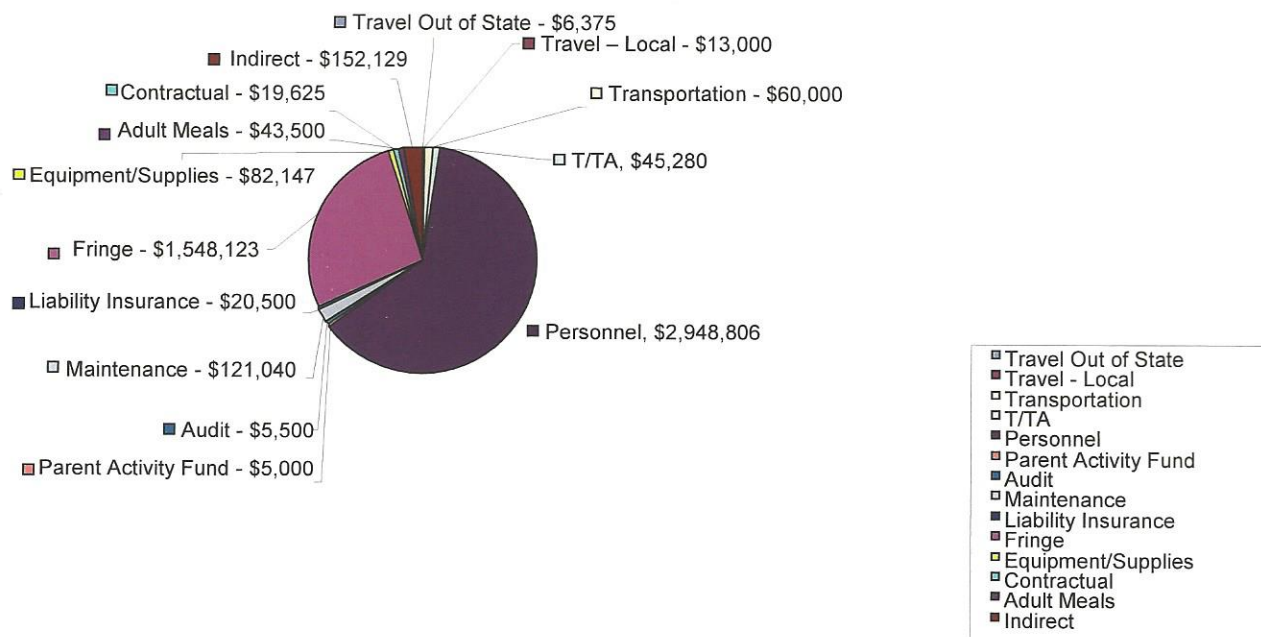
Under new provisions contained in the *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*, Head Start programs are now required to make available to the public a report published at least once during each fiscal year with the following categories and information.

Funding

For the 2014-2015 grant year, The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program was funded for a 10 month period and received \$5,071,025.00 in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and \$1,247,455.00 in supplemental state funding from the Department of Early Education and Care.

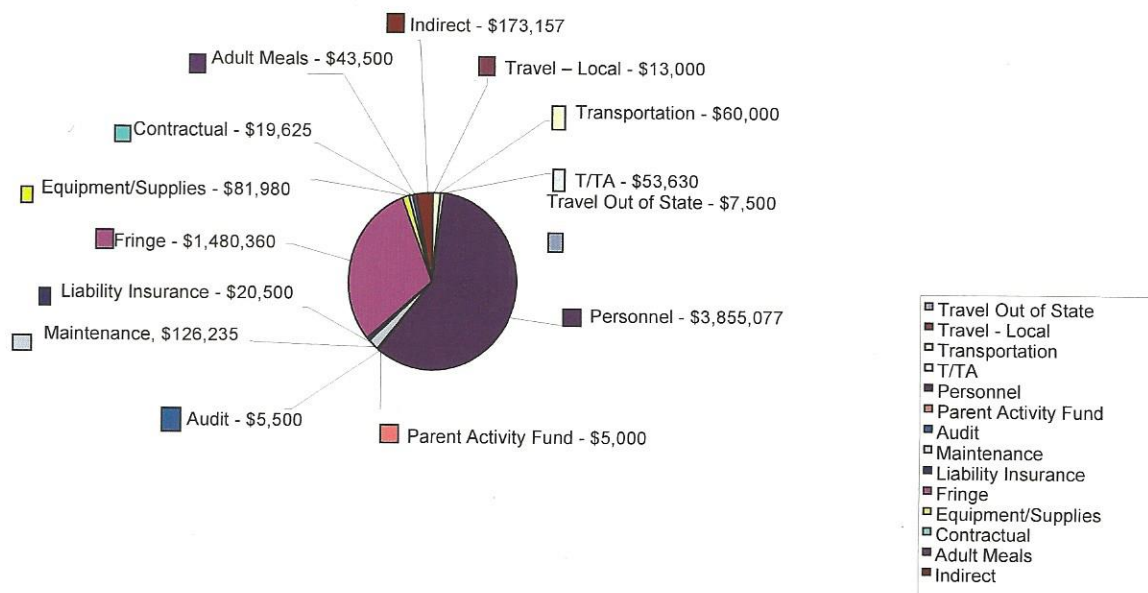
Budgetary Expenditures FY15

Budgetary expenditures FY '15:



This graph is an indicator of a 10-month grant cycle

Proposed Budget FY16



This graph is an indicator of a 10-month grant cycle

Funded Enrollment: For the 2014-2015 program year, the Worcester Child Development Head Start Program served 648 children and families throughout the City of Worcester. The program also served 21 children through a state Income Eligible contract.

In a year that brought us a winter we have not experienced in many years, the Worcester Child Development Head Start Program maintained an average daily attendance of 77%. Throughout the year, the program maintained its full enrollment and in some cases exceeded 100% of ACF funded enrollment. Approximately 92% of children served were from income-eligible families.

Results of the Most Recent Financial Audit: The most recent financial audit was conducted by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP and there were no program findings.

Mental Health/Special Education: The program's Mental Health Services support the social and emotional development of children, families and the community. The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program mental health professionals and Health Services

Advisory Council annually revise these services to expand its focus on three levels of information: prevention, identification/referral and treatment/support. The program recognizes the importance of providing immediate support to a child and family confronted with traumatic situations and has developed contingency plans to address these situations. Collaborations with the Department of Family, Medicine and Community Health at UMass Memorial Health Care, and Community Healthlink "Together for Kids Project" provide comprehensive early childhood mental health interventions and resources to support children, families and staff.

Percentage of Enrolled Children That Received Medical and Dental Exams: During the 2014-2015 program year, 100% of enrolled children received physical exams and 100% received dental exams.

Information about Family Engagement Activities: The Program offers a variety of family engagement opportunities and activities. These are designed to enhance families' unique skills and strengths and promote self-sufficiency. On site English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, family meetings, support groups and workshops are held throughout the year on a variety of topics based on family interest surveys. Other family engagement opportunities include classroom volunteering and participation in home visits, parent-teacher conferences, transitions, leadership opportunities, Know Your School Night, advocacy events, Policy Council, Advisory Councils and Head Start conferences.

Preparing Children for Kindergarten: The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program uses research-based curriculums that focus on individual domains of learning that include social-emotional development, approaches to learning, literacy, language development, math, science, creative arts, logic and reasoning, social studies, and physical health and development. Qualified teaching teams work with children individually and in small and large groups to support learning. Our classrooms are well equipped with materials and activities to stimulate learning in all developmental areas. Our program sites are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and received Level 3 status in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).

The program uses the Work Sampling System of assessment three times throughout the year to document and assess children's skills, knowledge, behavior and accomplishments across a wide variety of curriculum areas. This child assessment process allows teaching teams to monitor children's continuous progress and individualize instruction. Children's progress is shared with families during parent conferences and on home visits.

The program provides developmental, hearing and vision screenings for all children within 45 days of the child's entry into the program. Screening results are shared with teaching teams and families in order to plan activities and offer services that meet individual children's needs. If applicable, an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children requiring additional support and services is developed in collaboration with the Worcester Public Schools Special Education Department, The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program Disabilities staff and families.

Workshops are offered to better prepare families for the transition to a kindergarten program and families are encouraged to visit schools and attend Kindergarten Open Houses held in June. The child's Preschool Progress Report including other pertinent information is forwarded directly to each child's new school with parental consent. Individual Education Plans (IEP) of those children who require special educational services upon entering Kindergarten are also sent to provide continuity of service delivery. The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program works in partnership with Worcester Public Schools to host Transition Evenings within public schools in which our Head Start children will be transitioning. All children receive a transition packet that contains valuable information for both the child and family.



Funded Enrollment

648 children and families that reside in the City of Worcester

Classrooms

36 Center Based Classrooms program wide

Class size

1 teacher and 1 teacher assistant to 18 children

Teacher Credentials

6 teachers – Master's Degree

29 teachers – Bachelor's Degree

1 teacher – Associate's Degree

2 teacher assistants – Master's Degree

9 teacher assistants – Bachelor's Degree

25 teacher assistants – Associates Degrees

Family Demographics

Hispanic	50.3%
Black or African American	21.9%
White	20.8%
Biracial	2.9%
Asian	4.0%
American Indian	.1%

NAEYC

National Association for the Education of Young Children

Each of The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program building is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) which sets high standards and criteria that define quality and recognize programs that have demonstrated the capacity to sustain the highest quality services.



The Head Start Approach to School Readiness

The Head Start Approach to School Readiness means that children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children. Historically, Head Start has led the early childhood field with a strong, clear and comprehensive focus on all aspects of healthy development, including physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, all of which are essential to prepare children for school success. Head Start programs are required to establish school readiness goals which are defined as "the expectations of children's status and progress across domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical health and well-being and motor development, and social and emotional development that will improve readiness for kindergarten goals" and that "appropriately

reflect the ages of children, birth to five, participating in the program" (45 CFR Chapter XIII Head Start Regulation Part 1307.2 and 1307.3 (b)(1)(i), as amended).

Head Start views school readiness as children possessing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for success in school and for later learning and life. For parents and families, school readiness means they are engaged in the long-term, lifelong success of their child.

The Worcester Child Development Head Start Program's school readiness goals are aligned with the State's early learning guidelines, the MA Curriculum Frameworks and the Worcester Public Schools High Quality Teaching and Learning Framework.

