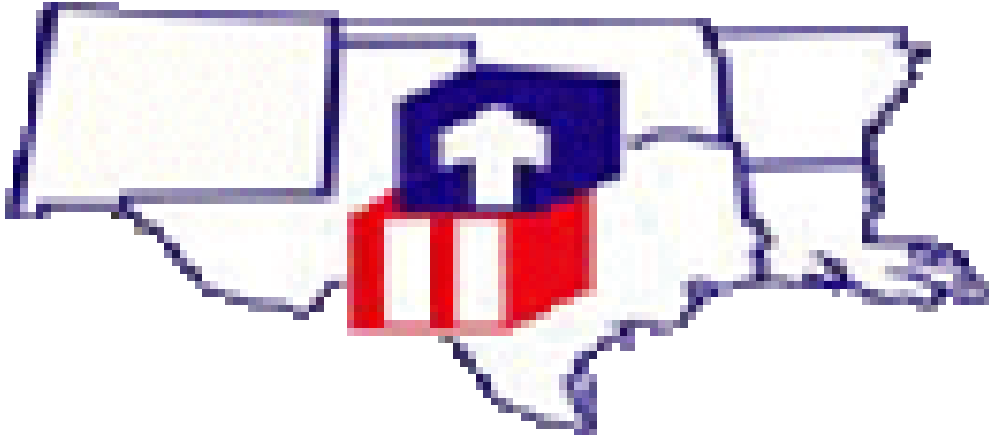


REGION VI HEAD START ASSOCIATION BOARD
Quarterly Reporting Form



Name: Jackie Govan

Position: HSSCO Director

Organization: HSSCO in Arkansas

E-Address: Jackie.govan@arheadstart.org

Correspondence:

1. Alferma Giles, HSCO in Texas
2. Kahree Wahid, HSCO in LA
3. Paula Brown, HSCO in OK
4. Casey Lafferty, HSCO in NM
5. Gloria Lopez, NM
6. Crystal Pena, Region 6 President
7. Sara Wilhite, AHSA President
8. Yasmina Vinci, NHSA President

Content Topics:

AHSA/HSSCO MEETING REPORT

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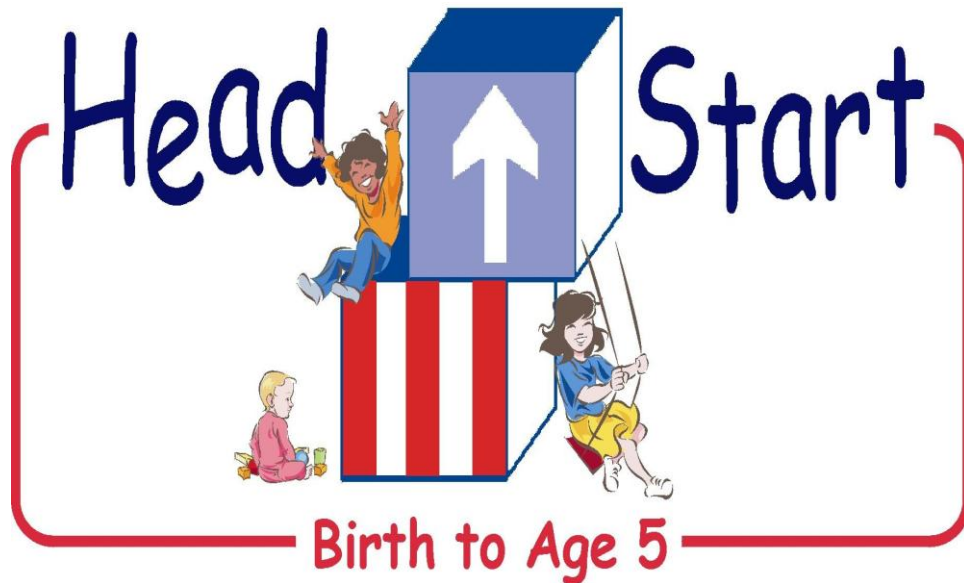
- I. Overview and Current Updates
- II. EHS/Head Start, Migrant-Seasonal, and EHS-CCPs
- III. HSSCO State Initiatives
- IV. State Partnerships & Activities
- V. State, Regional, & National Boards/\$pC
- VI. HSSCO Grant Re-Application/Annual Report
- VII. Upcoming Events

Reporting Information:

I. Overview and Current Updates

- Policies and Procedures
- The Final Rule for the HSPPS
- The future of Head Start/Changes

II. EHS/Head Start, Migrant-Seasonal, and EHS-CCPs Program Updates



The Head Start programs are thriving and moving forward. 2024 was a year of challenges and change with the New Final Rule, program conversions, enrollment decline, staffing issues, Homelessness, Designation Renewal, and so much more. As we continue to wait to see if all that we built will remain or be torn down, we continue to follow current regulations and standards. We currently have nineteen grantees in the State of Arkansas that serves approximately 7,311 children. The breakdown for the funded enrollment includes:

- Head Start – 3,941
- EHS – 3,211
- Migrant-Seasonal Head Start – 159

The homeless population for children served in the programs experiencing homelessness include 655 Homeless families served and 709 Homeless children served, and 678 priority types of documentation for eligibility for homelessness. We had the following programs to be identified on the Designation Renewal System from 2023 until current:

Fall of 2023 – CADC and ARVAC

Fall of 2024 – NADC

Winter - Delayed

Spring of 2025 – None

Better Beginnings four - Six Star Ratings

Level	Number	%
★★★★★	25	13.44%
★★★★★	5	2.69%
★★★★	66	35.48%
★★★	61	32.80%
★★	2	1.08%
★	1	0
0	27	14.52%
Total	186	

III. HSSCO State Initiatives (8)

The HSSCO director serves on the Arkansas Imagination Library Board. In July 2024, *Arkansas Imagination Library (ARIL)* and local program partners in all seventy-five counties celebrated a statewide milestone: More than five million Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library books have been mailed to the homes of Arkansas Children, birth to five years old. Currently, approximately 84,000 Arkansas children (46% of the state’s total birth to five population) receive books each month from local program partners. The annual cost is \$26 per child. ARIL provides half of the program costs (\$13 per child per year), while the remaining \$13 per child per year is raised by local program partners. ARIL has reached out to hospitals to sign newborn babies up for books. This year (2025), ARIL will also be working more with foster care children. In 2020, COVID-19 put a stop to so many regular things that were occurring for the good of children, but finally the Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) Homecoming will resume this year beginning in June in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. The purpose of the annual Homecoming (now known as the “*Music in the Mountains*”) is a celebration of the Smoky Mountain music heritage and a way for the town to express its appreciation for Dolly Parton’s work and contributions, as well as to plan next steps in ways to promote her books for children ages birth to 5 years.

We are still working hard to end *Homelessness* for families experiencing homelessness by getting resources and materials out to programs and continuing to make connections between Head Start and the McKinney Vento Liaisons in the school districts.

The HSSCO will continue to sponsor the quarterly *EHS-CCP Informational meetings* to address program needs. There are two meetings that will be scheduled this year in July and in November whereby the focus will be on Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Environments for Infants and Toddlers, as well as other areas of need that are shared. The team will be working with Curriculum Concepts and the Office of Early Childhood to plan and secure speakers for these two events.

The Arkansas Fatherhood Initiative is still going strong as we work to complete our quarterly Powerful Conversations with fathers (PC/F) this year. We will have our first PC/F on May 13th via zoom. whereby, Representative Jeremy Woolridge, Legislator, will share the pros and cons of being a great father. If you would like to join us, please use the zoom link below to access this dynamic hour of powerful conversations.

**Powerful Conversations with Fathers featuring.
Representative Jeremy Woolridge**

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.

When: May 13, 2025 11:30 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZllceuoqzMsG9zj2Pi-7_zt5TKSONcaf1yj

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

The HSSCO will continue to sponsor the quarterly EHS-CCP Informational meetings to address program needs. There are two meetings that will be scheduled this year in July and in November whereby the focus will be on Developmentally Appropriate Practices and Environments for Infants and Toddlers, as well as other areas of need that are shared. The team will be working with Curriculum Concepts and the Office of Early Childhood to plan and secure speakers for these two events.

The Opioid and Substance Misuse (OSM) advisory committee continues to work hard to address substance misuse in Arkansas. We have invited all early childhood programs to join us in this fight for prevention and recovery. We have such a great state team, and we have learned that we can conquer all things when we work together. There will not be a summit to address OSM, however, we will have several tracks at various conferences in the state. We are currently in the planning phase for the 2025 Opioid and Substance Misuse track for the Head Start Institute.



The 2025 School Readiness Summit (SR) is in its beginning stages for planning the annual summit. The Summit is scheduled for Monday, November 3rd and will focus on specific topics identified by the State Planning Team.



The HSSCO director has planned a couple of *Book Studies* for Head Start programs with a focus on burnout, wellness, and other topics to help relieve the day-to-day pressures that we all tend to face at home and at work. The statewide spring book study will focus on a book by Nick Trenton called, “STOP OVER THINKING!” The book focuses on the importance of understanding what you have been through, the exhausting situation you have put yourself into, how you get trapped in anxiety and stress, with proven techniques and scientific approaches that will help you to release stress and feel better. The selection for the fall session will be chosen at another time to support what is needed for programs at that specific time.

IV. Collaborative State Partnerships

The Collab Director worked with the AHSA in putting together and completing their five-year strategic plan for 2022-2027. The plan is updated from various committee chairs at each Association Class and Board meeting. The HSSCO director included a goal (Goal Number 5), which states that both organizations will work together to plan initiatives to support local programs by identifying what needs they have according to each state agency that the HSSCO director partners with. The agencies (24) have been identified (see below). The HSSCO director will conduct a survey to identify what services are needed by each Head Start program from the agencies listed below. This is a first but making these connections is so particularly important! The results will be shared once the data has been analyzed with all local programs and the identified needs will be shared in the 2026 comprehensive 5-year grant application. The HSSCO director and all partners will work together to identify how these needs can be met.

Agency /// purpose /// Feedback

The partners listed below include twenty-four organizations across Arkansas:

Preschool Inclusion Team

State Leadership Team Meetings (SLT)

State Interagency Coordinating Council

Excel by Eight

FASD/None for Nine Workgroup

AECC/State Advisory Council

AHVN Collaboration & Conference Planning

Safe Babies Court Team
Arkansas Childhood Obesity Prevention (ARCOP)
Arkansas Early Childhood Association – TEACH Program
Arkansas Oral Health Coalition
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Collaboration with a variety of Publishing Companies
ACAAA State Interagency Partnership Verbal Agreement
MV State Liaisons/Head Start Homeless Liaisons
Early Childhood Special Education/Head Start Disability Coordinators
Collaboration with State 619 Coordinator
Early Childhood LEADs – The Governor’s
LEARNs Act
AR Department of Education/DESE/OEC
AR Department of Health
AR Department of Human Services (DCFS)
AR Department of Higher Education
Curriculum Concepts, Inc.
Arkansas Imagination Library



V. State, Regional, and National Boards

ARKANSAS HEAD START ASSOCIATION BOARD/INSTITUTE & ACTIVITIES

The AHSA is made up of four classes: Directors, Staff, Parents, and Friends. The AHSA meets every other month to oversee business for each of the classes and to plan for the upcoming annual institute. The Board is made up of twenty-four members, six from each of the four classes. The Board approves all these activities.

The 2024 Institute was held on April 29 – May 3, 2024. We had some dynamic speakers and invited Khari Garvin, Director for the Office of Head Start, who did attend and met with directors and executive directors in a special meeting to listen to their concerns and share information on the Final Rule. This was the first year that the HSSCO director pulled all the dynamic constituents on the state (Governor Sanders), regional (Kenneth Gilbert), and national (Khari Garvin) levels together. Mr. Garvin also visited local Head Start programs in Arkansas. Thanks to the Dallas Regional Office as well for having so many program specialists to attend. It was a great institute and one to remember!!!

AHSA/HSSCO are in the process of planning for the 2025 State Institute and a Directors’ summit. The institute has been split into two separate places due to the excessive cost of hotels. The institute will be held at Fairfield Bay Resort and Conference Center in June and November. Recommendations have been made to the Board regarding speakers, registration

cost, theme, awards, and so much more. The theme for this event is “*Leading Change, Strengthening Unity, and Honoring Individuality.*” We have Sherri Stewart and Mills Rodgers as our speakers for June and November. Other items included in the planning for the institute in June and November include:

- Celebrating 60 years of Head Start
- Pre-Institute Session in November
- Pre-Institute – School Readiness Summit
- Opioids and Substance Misuse Track
- Educational Movie Night and Discussion
- Recognition of Outstanding and Degreed Staff
- Silent Auction,
- Fantastic Exhibitors, and
- So Much More.

The Directors’ Retreat is scheduled for September 2025.

AHSA/HSSCO takes pride in recognizing our outstanding program and degreed staff each year. They are recognized at a banquet in their honor each year at our state institute and are presented with a framed certificate. The recognition nominees for outstanding awards will be secretly held in August. We appreciate our Head Start family and all their accomplishments!

A strategic plan was developed by the HSSCO director and local programs. The association has several goals including assisting with building a stronger association and increasing attendance as well as the Dollar per Child raised in the state. We have committee chairs and committees in place, and we look forward to all program staff participating and helping to complete all seven goals in the five-year strategic plan.



REGION VI HEAD START ASSOCIATION

The HSSCO director serves on the Region Six Board and provides quarterly, oral, and written reports that outline all activities for the previous quarter. Since the last Region 6 Board meeting, the HSSCO director has been engaged in the following:

- Working on Scholarship information.
- Providing and sending out information on the AR/Region VI Institute.
- Posting information on the Region's website.
- Collaborating, planning, and sharing information with Collaboration Directors in Region VI monthly.
- Sending emails and trying to coordinate with other Region VI board members.
- Preparing for the NHSA Board and sub-committees and reporting to the Region VI Head Start and the State Association Boards.

The Region 6 Head Start Association will have its conference for 2025 this year in Dallas, Texas during the week of October 21st. More Information to Come...

The HSSCO Director maintains contact with the *Dallas Regional Office* on several issues regarding upcoming meetings, the LEARN Act, Designation Renewal System, HSSCO work, and more. Tatia Long is the newly assigned Regional Director. Information and responses were given, and things are moving forward positively. An update is provided to Tatia Long on a regular basis and when requested. Ongoing contact is also made with the OHS via monthly conference calls, emails, one visit per year, and other contacts as needed.



OFFICE OF HEAD START

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

OFFICE OF HEAD START (OHS)

This Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposes new and enhanced changes to the Head Start Program Performance Standards in three principal areas: workforce support, mental health, and other quality improvements. The Office of Head Start (OHS) **announced significant changes** to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) that would ensure fair compensation is a key component of high-quality early care and education. These proposed changes, if enacted, would stabilize the Head Start workforce and improve the quality of the

comprehensive services that Head Start families count on. They would significantly increase compensation for many Head Start staff, integrate mental health services into Head Start programming more broadly, and otherwise enhance services to help Head Start programs effectively and equitably meet the evolving needs of the communities they serve. Specifically, the proposed rule puts forward proposals for public comment that will improve wages, benefits, and job-quality for Head Start educators and other staff, as well as enhance program quality for children and families. The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposes changes designed to:

- Increase wages to align with preschool teachers in public school settings, to make progress toward full pay parity with elementary school teachers!
- Improve benefits for Head Start staff, including health insurance and paid leave, and enhance staff health and wellness support!
- Ensure better integration of mental health supports in program services!
- Improve child health and safety in program facilities!
- Improve family engagement services!
- Modernize the processes for programs to identify and meet community needs!

The OHS and the DRO sponsored some road shows centered around the New Rule in each region of the United States. The HSSCO director attended the one for region 6 in October 2024. It was truly epic!!! The team gave examples and scenarios, which made it quite easy to follow. Of course, we hope that all of this will continue but currently, we do not know.

On behalf of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), they shared that the Trump Administration has appointed a new Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Office of Early Childhood Development (ECD), Dr. Laurie Todd-Smith.



Dr. Todd-Smith joins ECD as a former public-school elementary and preschool teacher. She served as childcare director in multiples states including New Mexico, Arizona, and Mississippi. She most recently served at the America First Policy Institute as director of the Center for Education Opportunity & the Center for the American Child where she focused on assisting states to advance evidence-based education policy reforms including the expansion of school choice, early literacy, foster care reform, online safety of children, as well as a model policy for fentanyl curriculum in public schools. She

was the director of the Women's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Labor, focusing on childcare and paid family leave. Previously, Dr. Todd-Smith served as a senior education and workforce policy advisor to Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant, as well as serving on the State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC) in Mississippi. In those roles, she spearheaded several legislative initiatives that significantly improved public education in the state. These reforms led to remarkable growth in reading and math achievement outcomes for Mississippi's students, earning the state the title of the "Mississippi Miracle". The state is now leading the Nation for

growth in reading and math scores. Dr. Todd-Smith holds a doctorate in education from Mississippi State University, a master's degree from Western New Mexico University and a bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona.



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION (NHSA) Board

The HSSCO director serves as a Board member for the NHSA. The National Head Start Association's mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education. We hold the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, can succeed in life. We are the voice for more than 800,000 million children, 250,000 staff, and 1,600 grant recipients in the U.S. The NHSA's vision is to lead—to be the untiring voice that will not be quiet until every income-eligible child can access the Head Start model of support for the whole child, the family and the community—and to advocate—to work for policy and institutional changes that ensure all children and families have what they need to succeed. We envision a future where:

- The Head Start voice is powerful and united.
- The Head Start field is a valued partner and resource to early childhood development and education.
- There is nonpartisan support for increased federal commitment to Head Start; and
- Our children are healthier, our families empowered, our communities stronger and more vibrant.

NHSA is the central association for the Head Start workforce and serves as the national voice for early childhood education and leadership on Capitol Hill.

Preparation is also being made for:

- The NHSA Conference Expo in Ohio
- The NHSA Leadership conference in September in Washington D.C.
- The 2025 National Parent Conference in December

SEE UPCOMING EVENTS FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION
ON THESE DATES & LOCATIONS



What is the Dollar per Child Campaign?



The AHSA/HSSCO is working to improve the Dollar Per Child Campaign in Arkansas by including a specific goal in our strategic plan to address challenges and explore opportunities to ensure that Arkansas not only reach its \$pC but go well beyond in order to support NHSA’s efforts on Capitol Hill to secure increased funding and continue fighting to make Head Start even better!

Dollar per Child (\$pC) is NHSA's annual fundraising campaign to support our efforts in Washington, D.C. to strengthen Head Start for the 750,000 children and families, 250,000 staff, and their local communities that we assist. This effort is essential in raising awareness of Head Start’s role in communities across the country and securing funding to ensure the program’s high-quality education and comprehensive family services reach all eligible children and families. \$pC funds have helped the Head Start community secure increased federal funding every year in the last decade. Head Start faces unprecedented funding and policy challenges in Washington, D.C. Funds support our work in three areas to raise awareness about Head Start’s impact on children and families across the country:

1. Advocacy: Engaging at every level of government—local, state, and national—and with the administration. We provide the facts about Head Start—unbiased, nonpartisan, and clear.
2. Government Relations: Maintaining a constant presence on Capitol Hill, working with Congress, the White House, and the Office of Head Start to develop and shape early childhood education legislation and policy and ensure the Head Start community is heard.
3. Media: Shaping conversations about Head Start’s impact is at the forefront.

***The Head Start promise is simple:
Every child, regardless of circumstance at birth,
has the ability to reach their full potential.***

VI. HSSCO Grant Re-Application/Annual Report

The *HSSCO Refunding application* was completed and submitted in November 2024. The refunding application includes the application itself and a powerful logic model with goals and

objectives, which identifies strategic planning for each year. The HSSCO will begin the fifth year of the five-year grant application in March 2025. Therefore in 2026, it will be time again for a new five-year comprehensive grant application.

The HSSCO Annual Assessment report was also submitted in January 2025. The purpose of this report is to combine and compare data across the United States to highlight the HSSCO work that is being done in each state. A comprehensive report is put together and sent out to all states.

VII. Upcoming State, Regional, and National Events

ARKANSAS

- STOP Over Thinking Statewide Book Study – March -April 2025
- AECC Meeting – Office of Early Childhood – April 15, 2025
- Wellness Roundtable – HSSCO/ACAAA – April 7, 2025
- Rising Together: AR Pathways to Self-Sufficiency – May 15, 2025
- DPIL – The Homecoming – Pigeon Forge, TN – June 16-20, 2025
- AHSA/HSSCO’s Institute/Fairfield Bay, AR – June 23-24, 2025
- Head Start Directors’ Retreat – September 11-12, 2025/Location TBA
- ACAA’s Regional Conference/Hot Springs -October 6-10, 2025
- AECA Conference/NLR – October 8-11, 2025

REGIONAL

- Region 6 HSA Board Meeting – Virtual – April 7, 2025
- Region 6 Head Start Association Conference – October 21-24, 2025, in TX

NATIONAL

- NHSA Mid-Winter Conference -January 27-30, 2025
- NHSA Conference and Expo - Columbus, Ohio – May 19-22, 2025
- NHSA’s Innovation Summit/Denver, Colorado -June 10-12, 2025
- NHSA Leadership Conference/WA D.C. – September 15-18, 2025
- NHSA’s National Parent Conference/Nashville, TN – December 14-18, 2025

For more information, please feel free to check out our website at www.arheadstart.org



Board Action Items: Some Board Pictures are still needed for the website (See Below):

(LA) Gregory Bradley

(LA) Anthony Martin

(AR) Jennifer Thomas

(TX) Socorro Rodriguez

Report Attachments (if any): Attachment

Signature(s): _____

Date: _____
Date: _____

Thank You!

HSSCO – JG