



REVISED Head Start 5-year Grant Requirements and Guidance

By Michael Shepsis, Esq. and Allison Ma'luf, Esq.

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The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) recently issued a [revised Information Memorandum \(IM\)](#) regarding 5-year Head Start project grants. The revised IM updates guidance initially issued in July 2013 setting forth new requirements for 5-year grant recipients and the process for grant renewal. The updates mostly include changes in timeframes and in information that must be submitted to the regional office. All Head Start grantees should carefully review the revised IM. The following highlights the new grant conditions in the original and revised IM and notes in parenthesis where the original guidance has been revised.

Recipients of five year grants must now complete certain requirements relating to governance and leadership, health and safety, school readiness and the audit process within an established time frame. The tasks required include:

- The board of directors conducting a [governance and leadership capacity screening](#) within 60 calendar days (originally 90 days) of the start of the project period. The screening is intended to strengthen the grantee's shared governance systems by identifying where changes need to be made.
- The grantee conducting a [health and safety screening](#) of each center and/or family child care home where services are provided within 45 calendar days of the start of the program/school year or, if the project period begins during the program/school year, within 45 calendar days¹ of the start of the project period. The health and safety screening is intended to help a grantee identify changes that need to be made with respect to facilities, classroom space, supplies, and procedures.
- The board of directors submitting certifications to its regional office for both screenings. The [governance and leadership certification](#) must now confirm that the screening was conducted and a training plan developed within 75 calendar days of the start of the

¹**Correction as of December 31, 2013:** Please note, this is a correction from our December 2013 posting. We were notified by the Office of Head Start that this time period had not been officially changed to 5 days, but was a typo on their website. The time period *should be* 45 days as noted above.



project period (originally no governance screening certification was required). The [health and safety certification](#) must confirm that the grantee is in compliance with all applicable health and safety requirements within 75 calendar days of the start of the program/school year or, if the project period begins during the program/school year, within 75 calendar days of the start of the project period (originally the grantee had only 15 calendar days to submit the screening).

- The grantee participating in individual school readiness meetings with its regional office.
- The grantee watching a 3 hour [webcast](#) by the Office of Head Start (OHS) about the purpose and importance of the annual audit within 6 months of the start of the project period. To receive credit after completing the webcast, the grantee must fill out the registration form available in the above webinar link.

In addition to the new grant conditions, the IM provides information on the grant renewal process for 5-year project grants. The grantee will receive a detailed funding guidance letter from the regional office 6 months prior to the refunding date. Grant applications will then be due 3 months prior to the start of the new project period.