

## Annual and Midyear Report Form

**State Name:** ARKANSAS

**Date:** May 10, 2015

- Mid-Year Report-Timeframe:** March 1– August 30, 2014  
**Due Date: September 30, 2014**
- Annual Report-Timeframe:** March 1, 2014 –Feb. 28, 2015  
**Due Date: May 31, 2015**

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# Arkansas

**Briefly describe your accomplishments and actual outcomes in the following areas.**

Facilitate collaboration among Early Head Start and Head Start Grantees and entities that provide child and family services to low-income families. Describe your accomplishments and outcomes in the four required priority areas...

***Please Note: The dark italic in this report represent the activities from the past six months.***

- **School Transitions, including state data systems**

## **School Transition**

- To foster seamless and long-term success of Head Start children by promoting continuity of services between Head Start Child Development and Learning Framework and State early learning standards including pre-K entry assessment and interoperable data systems.

**OHS Priority Goal 2: To enhance and maintain collaboration, coordination, and alignment of transition services and curriculum by Head Start programs with state-funded pre-Kindergarten programs and the public schools.**

## **List Strategies:**

1. Identify ways to link Head Start and LEAs together in providing transportation assistance to families.
2. Coordinate with (ADE) LEAs and State-Funded Pre-K in planning for successful transitions in order to meet the needs of pre-school and Kindergarten children.
3. Establish an ongoing plan of action to address ways that pre-K and Kindergarten can come together on a regular basis to support school readiness efforts.
4. To support the alignment of transitional services and program curriculum and resources from other agencies, which is integrated with the Child Development and Early Learning Frameworks for all Head Start programs, Common Core State Standards, and the state benchmarks?

The HSSCO is collaborating and working with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) in planning a statewide event to address several critical topics in early childhood education and maintaining communication between pre-k and Kindergarten teachers. The HSSCO has been meeting with the Department of Education and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) to plan the third year for our School Readiness summit, which will be held this year at the Holiday Inn in Little Rock, AR. This is an ongoing system of collaboration and communication for School

Readiness (SR)/Transition between State-Funded Pre-K, Head Start, HIPPPY, and the Public School system. These groups will come together for the third time on November 18, 2014 to address transition, school readiness, and data systems. The SR Institute will feature a speaker from the National Policy Equity Group from Washington D.C. , a parent's perspective from our new State Parent Coordinator, and participants will hear from local transition teams on how they have maintained their collaboration for the past three years. The speaker will highlight a framework for using transition strategies, what to look for to ensure that children are ready for school, pre-K to third grade approaches, as well as, other transitional methods. An ongoing communication system called the Early Childhood Forum was also created to support the ongoing work and to maintain an open line of communication with all early childhood programs. School Readiness Teams are responsible for meeting on a regular basis on the local level throughout the school year to address school readiness, transition, and data systems.

The HSSCO director continues to work with the state SR team and local school readiness teams across the state. The collaboration office has set up a communications forum for local teams to access in order to continue their work on the local level and to continue an open line of communication with state and local teams. The forum will be used to keep all; local early childhood programs and early childhood professionals up-to-date on state issues and initiatives. The open forum started in February, 2013 and continues to educate and keep child care and Head Start programs up-to-date on state early childhood issues. To access the forum, go to [www.arheadstart.org](http://www.arheadstart.org), go to the News Menu item and then click Forum. Instructions are provided for your convenience.

***The state SR planning team has met several times in planning for the 2015 fall SR Summit. This year the team will focus on community needs centered on data systems, school readiness and transition in each of the local communities throughout the state. We have asked that all local teams add a parent to their SR teams to support our efforts as we move towards statewide family engagement.***

The HSSCO director worked closely with the Division of Child Care in submitting a grant to the Kellogg Foundation to improve our systems for school readiness and transition. We will use the grant funds to continue our work with our annual School Readiness summit and engaging the local programs. This is only one of three areas that the grant focused on. I will share the other areas in this report based on the goals established. However, the grant was for a million dollars for two years. The funds were sent through the Division of Child Care (DCC) (whereby, they received 50,000 for both years for training and indirect cost) because the HSSCO's operating budget was too low. However, the DCC sub-contracted with the HSSCO and my office received 475,000 a year to complete the three goals for the project.

The state of AR has completed this goal but is continuously monitoring and updating its progress. We will continue to move forward in maintaining collaboration, coordination, and alignment of transition services and all aspects of preparing children for the public schools.

*In the past six months, the HSSCO has taken the lead in implementing the Kellogg grant, which deals with building early childhood systems as we work on a statewide family engagement framework and revamping our early learning standards. We now have deliverables in both of these areas. The next steps will be to complete the training format and to conduct a train the trainers, who will be responsible for training all teachers and caregivers in the next phase.*

{HSSCO Strategic Plan, Goal 2}

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**Professional Development**

- to collaborate with institutions of higher education to promote professional development through education and credentialing programs from early childhood providers in states

**OHS Priority Goal 2: To enhance and support EHS/HS/MSHS program’s ability to access quality professional development opportunities in order to maintain skilled and competent staff.**

**List Strategies:**

1. *Share different ways that EHS/Head Start can access professional development quality training and resources.*
2. *To promote linkages with Child Care Resource and Referral Networks to promote Head Start programs*
3. *To promote local linkages between Head Start programs and the Traveling Arkansas’ Professional Pathways (TAPP) for professional development.*
4. *To promote linkages between Higher Education for increased access to appropriate degree opportunities and to access online courses.*
5. *To link EHS/HS/MSHS programs to appropriate quality professional development trainings in the state that meets the needs of their program and program staff.*
6. *To facilitate the lead for connecting EHS/HS/MSHS programs to the National Centers for professional development: Quality Teaching & Learning, EHS National Resource Center, Program Management & Fiscal Operations, Health, and Parent, Family, & Community Engagement.*
7. *Collaborate with all state partners in accessing information on quality training among agencies/organizations and share with EHS/HS/MSHS programs. Including programs that serve children with disabilities services to dual-language learners, and to address cultural and linguistic responsiveness.*
8. *To collaborate with other state partners and facilitate ways to problem-solve and eliminate the difficulty for EHS/HS/MSHS programs to:*

**Describe the outcome/results:**

The HSSCO director provides ongoing state updates to EHS/Head Start programs through scheduled bi-monthly meetings, emails, conference calls, and random visits to programs.

Directors are given information and resources on the national centers, upcoming training and technical assistance, and updated resources.

The AHSA had its annual Training Institute in March, 2014 in Hot Springs, AR. We had over 300 participants to attend with dynamic speakers, fireside chat with the Dallas Regional Office, Exhibitors, and lots of dynamic small group sessions. We had great participation from our national centers, early childhood professionals, the TTA Specialists, and the Early Childhood Specialists. We also set up for specialist working with the Affordable Care Act to sign people up for insurance. It was a great institute!

For our next institute in 2015, we are planning to add a pre-conference day to allow for more quality training opportunities. We have selected for our theme: “*Celebrating 50 Years of Empowering Children and Families.*” We will bring in Dr. Becky Bailey to do our opening session with a motivational presentation focused on our theme and a small group session on her Positive Conscious Discipline. It will be a great institute!

Representatives from the Arkansas Head Start-State Association (AHSA) and the HSSCO are making plans to attend the 2014 Region VI Head Start (5-state) Institute. The institute will be held in New Mexico in November of this year. Some of the professional development opportunities and activities that will take place include:

1. Pre-Institute Sessions
2. General Sessions w/Guest Speakers
3. Institute Sessions w/presenters
4. Regional Office Fireside Chat
5. Exhibitors, Networking, & State meetings

***The AHSA had its annual Training Institute in March, 2015 in Hot Springs, AR. We added a pre-conference day to allow for more quality training opportunities. Our theme for this institute was “Celebrating 50 Years of Empowering Children and Families.” We brought in Dr. Becky Bailey to do our opening session with a motivational presentation focused on our theme and a small group session on her Positive Conscious Discipline. In celebrating over 50 years of Head Start services, we had a Head Start birthday party that focused on the history of Head Start! We had over 300 participants to attend with dynamic speakers, fireside chat with the Dallas Regional Office, Exhibitors, and lots of dynamic small group sessions. We had great participation from our early childhood professionals, the TTA Specialists, and the Early Childhood Specialists.***

Arkansas has changed the name of their professional development registry from the Traveling Arkansas Professional Pathways (TAPP) Registry to the Early Childhood Professional Development Registry. Registry details ten levels of career development based on training, education, experience in the field and professional development activities. The TAPP spectrum plots a course for any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early childhood care and education. The HSSCO director is working closely with the DCC to update this system in order to better serve its clients. The professional development registry has been updated and renamed as the Early Childhood Professional Development Registry. The revised registry is

currently being updated with changes that will work better for Arkansas' caregivers and professionals.

The Division continues to provide FREE training to early childhood professionals through the registry. A new professional development team is in place working with NAEYC to improve the state's professional development process. Arkansas will be using the NAEYC's Blueprint for professional development as a model for creating our own blueprint for the state. The HSSCO director serves on this professional development state team. ***This group continues to meet on a monthly basis to plan and outline a more user friendly professional development registry.***

The HSSCO director worked closely with the Division of Child Care in submitting a grant to the Kellogg Foundation to improve our Early Learning Standards (ELS). We will use the grant funds to research and to update our ELS and create a seamless set of standards from birth to five years old. All early childhood professionals will have to be trained on this new set of standards. This is only one of three areas that the grant will focus on. I will share the other areas in this report under specific HSSCO goals that have already been established.

***The ELDS has been renamed the Arkansas' Child Development Early Learning Standards (CDELS). These set of standards are from birth to age five, researched based, and reader-friendly. We will be starting our public comment period in June and have national experts to review and provide feedback. We are really excited about the work that this committee has done through the leadership of the HSSCO director.***

The HSSCO Director is working with the Early Care and Education team to provide CLASS training in Arkansas. The Early Care & Education team will be working together with Teachstone to present CLASS Certification and Coaching Experiences. This experience comes in two parts (1) In providing the opportunity for participants to attend a CLASS certification training and (2) for participants to attend a 20-hour train-the-trainer CLASS training to all Head Start programs in AR. These trainings are scheduled for February and April, 2015 in Conway, AR. This will be a great opportunity for Head Start programs who need more CLASS training.

The HSSCO participated and attended the Louisiana Head Start Association's (LHSA) conference on August 3-6, 2014. The director provided training and assistance in setting up the conference. Training session topics included CCSS: What Does this Mean for Head Start and PFCE Frameworks. The director also attended the LHSA's Board meeting and other sessions for professional growth and development.

There were many other conferences or workshops that the HSSCO announced and shared with EHS/Head Start programs that fell within the many content areas for specialists and other staff. In order to promote linkages with the many different early childhood programs and agencies, Head Start is included in conferences held by Parenting in Arkansas, ABC, Home Visiting, Child Care, Higher Education, the Health Department, and many other agencies and organizations.

***There are several additional workshops that will really help to move Arkansas forward this year. One is the poverty workshop and the other is the Aligning systems by the Kellogg***

*foundation. These trainings will be scheduled for May and June, 2015, but they will be so beneficial to the work that we are doing with the Kellogg grant.*

{HSSCO Strategic Plan, Goal 3}

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- **Child Care and Early Childhood Systems/QRIS**

**Child Care and Early Childhood Systems**

- To coordinate activities with the State agency responsible for State CCDBG program and resource and referral, to make full-working-day and full calendar year services available to children. Include Head Start Program Performance Standards in State efforts to rate the quality of programs (Quality Rating and Improvement System, or QRIS) and support Head Start programs in participating in QRIS and partnering with child care and early childhood systems at the local level.

**OHS Priority Goal 1:** To enhance and maintain collaboration and coordination among EHS/HS/MSHS with child care in order to provide full-day, full-year comprehensive and quality services for children.

**OHS Priority Goal 4:** To enhance and support strong collaboration AND coordination among EHS/HS/MSHS, state-funded pre-K, and public schools in building early childhood systems and access to quality comprehensive services for all children.

**List Strategies:**

1. *To support collaborative efforts between child care and Head Start to provide full-day/full-year service delivery models, shared trainings, and other partnerships and activities.*
2. *To promote local linkages between Head Start programs and the Child Care Resource and Referral Network.*
3. *To promote expansion of quality services for infant and toddler care.*
4. *Partner with Higher Education programs to access resources related to child care and cross trainings.*
5. *To facilitate the involvement of EHS/HS/MSHS programs in outreach and public awareness activities at the state and local levels.*
6. *Establish an ongoing, supportive, and collaborative relationship with child care.*
7. *Create or purchase a software tracking system for all early childhood programs that supports the State Longitudinal Data System.*
8. *To maintain collaborative and ongoing relationships with national, regional, state, and local community service organizations.*
9. *To provide information and update reports to the EHS/HS/MSHS programs bi-monthly regarding the focus and activities of the State Advisory Committee (SAC).*
10. *To unify early childhood data systems (program assessment data) across the State of Arkansas.*

The HSSCO director serves on the Arkansas Better Beginnings (BB) Quality Rating Improvement System committee. Programs in the state of Arkansas are currently going through the three-level process. Arkansas has approximately 1044 quality approved centers that provide quality services to over 82,991 children. In addition to these numbers, we have many programs that are in the process of completing levels one, two, and three. Head Start has approximately 85% of its programs that have completed some or all three levels. The BB QRIS committee is currently working on adding levels four, five, and maybe six. This committee meets occasionally. Sub-committees have been formed to add more focus on specific content areas that need to be updated. The team will incorporate the CLASS model in levels 4 and 5. We have also added licensing requirements to level one with some major changes and updates.

There was an awareness meeting set up by the BB team held in August, 2014 to solicit input on ways to move forward with the BB process. Early childhood professionals came from all across the state to share their input and ideas for the future success of BB. It was a great meeting and information collected will be used to move the BB planning team forward with levels 4 and 5.

Arkansas is applying for the Preschool Development Expansion grant. The purpose of the grant is to support state and local efforts to build, develop, and expand High-Quality Preschool Programs so that more children from low-and moderate families enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and in life. Arkansas has identified 13 programs across the state that has been identified with high needs for pre-k expansion. These programs include ABC and Head Start programs. The grant is due on October 14, 2014.

***Arkansas did receive the Pre-K Expansion and Development Grant for four years, whereby, we will receive over \$60 million to serve pre-school children (4 year olds) in new and existing programs. Teachers in these programs will have to have an early childhood degree. The HSSCO director read grants and helped to make recommendations for the first round. 44 applications were submitted and only 10-12 qualified for approval. There will be a second round whereby all early childhood programs can apply, but extra points will be given to priority and focused school districts. Selections will be announced in May.***

The HSSCO director created a Statewide Fatherhood Initiative team in Arkansas on the state level. The team meets each month to put a process in place to assist fathers in many different ways. The team is moving forward in building an infra-structure to assist and engage fathers in their child's education and life. The state committee has created a vision, mission, by laws, established a team name, conducted a fatherhood survey, and will have it first statewide fatherhood march and rally on November 1, 2014 at the State Capitol. The state has a very diverse team that when everyone works together, we achieve great things with no funds. The name of the initiative is called, "The Fatherhood and Family Initiative: Fathers Engaged and Empowered to Learn (FEEL)." The surveys will be analyzed after the event and a plan will be place to assist those fathers based on need.

***The survey was analyzed and used to provide the top three identified needs to train fathers in five locations around the state. We received a grant from the General Improvement Fund in the amount of \$30,000 to complete this statewide initiative. Coach Sidney Moncrief and his Moncrief One team is conducting the statewide training. Our next steps will be to set up a***

*meeting with judges all across the state to set up a fatherhood mentor program and work with barbershops to create conversations about early childhood education and how to engage fathers in their child's education and life all across the state.*

The HSSCO director worked closely with the Division of Child Care in submitting a grant to the Kellogg Foundation to identify a Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) that aligns with the State's Early Learning Standards. We will use the grant funds to pilot an assessment that will benefit all pre-k children. This is only one of three areas that the grant focused on. I will share the other areas in this report based on the goals established. However, the grant was for a million dollars for two years. The funds were sent through the Division of Child Care (DCC), whereby, they received 50,000 for both years for training and indirect cost. The HSSCO's operating budget was too low to receive the funds directly, but sub-contracted with the DCC and the HSSCO received 475,000 a year to complete the three goals for the project.

*We will begin our work on the kindergarten entry screener as soon as we complete the early learning standards. We are finishing our first year with the Kellogg grant. We will research another screener during the second year of the grant (by 2016).*

{HSSCO Strategic Plan, Goal 1 and 4}

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- **Support of Regional Office Priorities**

**Regional Office Priority Goal 5:** To support Regional Office priorities, projects, and initiatives by maintaining an open line of effective communication and ongoing Human Development relationships and activities.

**List Strategies:**

- *To participate in monthly conference calls.*
- *To complete accurate monthly, mid-year, and annual reports of state activities.*
- *To participate and support RO activities and initiatives when asked.*
- *To collaborate with the Regional Office in planning the Region VI Institute.*
- *To work with the Regional Office in completing the HSSCO's Strategic Plan.*
- *To work cooperatively and consistently with the RO in supporting EHS/HS programs, while maintaining connections with the TTA systems and the National Centers.*

**Describe the outcome/results:**

The AR HSSCO has worked closely with the Dallas Regional Office liaison on an ongoing basis. The activities for the past six months (March 1, 2014 through August 31, 2014) include face-to-face productive meetings with the program specialists and the Regional Director (during state institute), TTA teams, and the regional manager to plan and address better ways to work together. The regional office was very supportive in planning for the five-state conference and worked with the collaboration director via conference calls, emails, and onsite conference work. The regional office maintains accurate updates and provides grantee reports and needed

information to support the work of the collaboration director through monthly conference calls and participation at Region VI Association Board meetings. There have been some scheduling problems with conference calls due to the HSSCO having to attend required meetings during the time that the Regional Office scheduled the calls. Other communications include ongoing emails and phone calls.

*There has been some turnover in the Dallas Regional Office in terms of persons to work with the HSSCO directors in Region VI. The new appointee to work with HSSCO directors at this time is Shannon Hills. Shannon has arranged for our conference calls to continue and we are planning to meet soon in Dallas.*

{HSSCO Strategic Plan, Goal 5}

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**Briefly discuss the following aspects of your work:**

**Your activities as a member of the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care**

The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (AECC) convenes on a quarterly basis (January, April, July, and October). The commission is charged with supporting and advising the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education by ensuring that all Arkansas children and their families have access to a safe high-quality, developmentally appropriate, nurturing, learning environment and by educating and assisting parents, providers, and communities to prepare children for future success. The work continues for strengthening and expanding partnerships with other agencies and organizations for connected action, as the commission focus on a diverse set of topics and activities. The AECC met in January, April, and July of this year and for this six month report. The focus of these meetings included:

- Preschool Development Expansion Grant
- Goals & Measurable for DCC
- School Readiness in Arkansas
- ASSET Mapping Project
- Selecting the Outstanding Early Child Care Professionals in AR
- Statewide Fatherhood Initiative
- Updating the AECC's Standing Committees
- New Licensing Regulations

The next meeting will be in October, 2014, and January, 2014. The HSSCO director serve as chair for the AECC.

*The AECC continue to meet on a quarterly basis. During this mid-term, the AECC met in October and January, 2015. As chair, the commission has accomplished so much in Re-vamping our goals, sharing the state's work plan, and working closely in decision-making processes. The commissioners are very connected and does a great job in sharing information and participating in state activities.*

The UALR College of Business team is working on an asset mapping system to include all DHS resources. The goal is to have a website that is efficient for the general public. They are looking for a name for the mapping project. The goals are to create an online mapping system, online resource guide and a place for to house the “Getting Ready for School” publications. It was noted that this is still a work in progress. Tonya Russell shared that DCCECE would have brochures from UALR, social media to let folks know about the new initiative. They will use the Better Beginnings website and word of mouth to get the information out to the public. UALR will also be sharing at meetings and events that they are scheduled to attend. The ARRA funds made this state activity possible for Arkansas. This will be a great resource once it is rolled out to the public.

***The ASSET mapping system still has not been rolled out.***

The work you have completed to date on the required annual needs assessment update of the needs of Head Start grantees in the State with respect to coordination, collaboration, and alignment of services and alignment of curricula and assessments

The required annual needs assessment has been sent out to Head Start programs to complete with an expiration date for completion in October, 2014. Arkansas has begun preparation for the 2014 Needs Assessment Survey in preparation for the upcoming revisions of the 5-year grant application in 2016. The HSSCO director has added military families to the needs assessment document. It is expected that we will have 100% participation from Head Start programs in response to the Needs Assessment.

***We did not receive the 100% participation from all programs, but we did receive responses from over half the programs and the data has been analyzed and put into a revised strategic plan. The goals will be redirected to reflect the priorities from the Dallas Regional Office and the Office of Head Start in the next report. The HSSCO director did add military families to this needs assessment and has been working to gather data on what other states are doing to assist children of military families. Some feedback was also provided from programs in the needs assessment, which will definitely be followed up on.***

How you have involved the State Head Start Association and other partners in the ongoing work of the State Collaboration Office throughout the grant year

The HSSCO director serves on many committees in the state to see how to coordinate services to Head Start/EHS programs with other state partners. Other partners include such agencies and organizations as: Arkansas Advocates, Invest Early, Medical Homes, AR Health Department, Parenting in Arkansas, UALR, Oral Health Coalition, Dept. of Higher Education, UAMS, Zero to Three/CASA, and many more. The HSSCO puts forth every effort to share information with the AHSA in a variety of ways.

The Arkansas Head Start Association reviews, approves, and/or disapproves budgets, the Collaboration Grant, and all other board items prior to submission. The Collaboration Director provides state reports to the Arkansas Head Start Directors Class and Arkansas

Head Start Association Board of Directors at their bi-monthly meetings. The Collaboration Director and Administrative Services Manager disseminate information via emails on upcoming initiatives and trainings frequently. The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office solicits input from the Arkansas Head Start Association about representation from Head Start and Early Head Start on state-level committees. The Collaboration Director meets via conference call with the Arkansas Head Start Association President on a regular basis

The AHSA's Board meets bi-monthly, whereby the HSSCO director provide national, regional, and state updates and information to all Head Start directors. During this time, the director plans for a state Institute planning meeting, Class (Directors, Staff, Friends, & Parents), meetings, and the AHSA's Board meeting. The AHSA's Board monitors and approves all financial changes and updates. In August, the HSSCO recommended to the 'AHSA's board to amend its policies and procedures to include a parent representative on the board. The parent representative will serve on the board as others, but would also advocate for other parents to attend so that we could get their perspective and input regarding state issues.

The AHSA supports state efforts and initiatives by identifying representatives on the following commissions, task forces, and committees:

- AECC
- School Readiness Task Force
- The Region VI Board
- State Fatherhood Committee

Plus, Head Start programs lead the way for coordinating and developing the school readiness local teams across the state of Arkansas. These teams work together in working on transition, school readiness goals, and data systems.

- The HSSCO director visits all EHS/Head Start programs that have been placed on the list for Designation Renewal.
- New Head Start/EHS Directors - The HSSCO director also provided support and outreach to new EHS/Head Start directors by visiting their sites to share information and to offer support for their new position. A welcome packet is given to each new director that provides information about the AHSA, the HSSCO, and a list of all EHS/Head Start programs in the state and their contact information. Currently we have four new EHS/Head Start directors in the state. All visits and information sharing was completed by the end of June, 2012.

#### AHSA's Audit Report

The financial records for the AHSA/HSSCO was audited by the Shoptaw, LaBahn, & Company, P.A. as of June, 2014 and the related statements of activities and statements of cash flow for the

years then ended. The report showed that the AHSA/HSSCO is in conformity with accounting principles accepted in the United States/. The company provided an audit report in accordance with Government Auditing standards, which highlights consideration of the AHSA's internal controls over financial reporting and compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants. The report was submitted to the AHSA in July, 2014 for review and approval.

AHSA Class/Board Bi-Monthly Meeting

The AHSA had its bi-monthly meeting (March, May, July, September, November, and January), whereby, EHS/Head Start grantees attend the Class and Board meeting. The HSSCO and the AHSA is working to involve more parents in these meetings. We have guest speakers to come in occasionally to share information during each meeting for directors, staff, and parents. This year, the HSSCO director worked with the AHSA to update their By Laws, Mission, Vision, and their policies and procedures. All changes and updates will go before the Board in November, 2014.

Arkansas Head Start Association Institute

The Arkansas Head Start Association and the State Collaboration Office presented our state institute in March, 2014 and 2015 in Hot Springs, AR.

***The AHSA held its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Reading is Electric Read-A-Thon for eight weeks in January through February. Over half the programs participated and winners will be announced at the Annual Training Institute in March, 2015. First, second, and third place winners will receive a basket of reading books and reading activities to use in their programs. This is a literacy activity to also support the GLRC.***

Region VI Head Start Association

The HSSCO director is working closely with the Region VI Head Start Association. The director provided strategic planning for all board members in helping the organization to re-structure and to revise its original By-Laws and policies and procedures. The association now has an active strategic plan that will move the organization forward. The By Laws were sent out to the membership for suggestions and comments. The next meeting will be in November in New Mexico, whereby the revised By Laws will be voted on for approval. The HSSCO director also recommended changes in the meeting format structure for Board meeting in order to allow time for sub-committees to meet. The Board approved and started implementing in July, 2014. Meetings are more productive now.

***The HSSCO director was elected as the friend for the Region VI Board. The HSSVO will be serving in two roles: friend affiliate and as an advisor for the upcoming year. The HSSCO director also participated and completed activities for the Region VI conference, which will be held in Sugarland, Texas in July, 2015.***

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A description of the work you have completed on developing or revising the five-year strategic plan
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The Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office updates the 2012-2017 strategic plan quarterly to identify the work that is being done and the completed goals. The AHSA's Board reviews the plan annually for updates and changes (if any). The revised strategic plan is posted on the Head Start Enterprise System, ECLKC, and the AHSA's web-site. The HSSCO will be preparing procedures for the next 5-year grant within the next year, whereby the 2015 needs assessment will be completed and analyzed.

The HSSCO has incorporated some of the strategic plan goals in the annual and mid-year report to show the connections from the strategic plan in relation to the work that is being done in the HSSCO.(see this report).

***The strategic plan is being used on a regular basis to work with EHS/HS programs, to work with partners, and to create new systems with other partners as we focus on other early childhood issues.***

Your efforts to support the coordination of Head Start services to American Indian/Alaska Native and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start programs

There are two migrant and Seasonal programs in the state of Arkansas and Louisiana that are also regular Head Start program providers. In coordinating services for these programs, the Arkansas Head Start-State Collaboration Office maintains a section of its web-site that specifically indicates where these programs are located and the services that they provide. The CAPCA Head Start program is the lead grantee for migrant services in AR and LA. MCAEOC is the delegate, whereby, programs are located in AR and MO.

The HSSCO also collaborates with Welcome the Children in planning statewide training and workshops that addresses the needs of working with Migrant and seasonal children and families to ensure that the program needs are being met. This organization provides such trainings as: Cross Cultural Perspectives, Anti-Bias Curriculum, Enhancing Language Development, Exploring Differences within Families, and much more. These trainings are free to all EHS/Head Start programs.

***We currently have no American Indian/Alaska Native programs in Arkansas.***

#### **Describe additional activities and successes in the past six months.**

- The HSSCO director is working closely with the Grade-Level Reading Campaign launched by the Winthrop-Rockefeller Foundation. The campaign goal is to reduce by half the number of children who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade. The issue originated from student results on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), whereby, 70% of Arkansas's children scored below proficient and AR ranked 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation on the test. Also, 24% of Arkansas' third graders scored below proficient on the 2011 Benchmark exam. Arkansas plans to foster a culture that understands the importance of reading, build capacity at the top

level to make policy changes and implement programs as needed, expand the knowledge base about what works to increase reading levels, and to develop and advocate for policy solutions that will increase reading proficiency levels among elementary school children. The HSSCO is working closely with Head Start programs by:

1. Releasing a video that showcase the importance of grade level reading,
2. Conducting a statewide activity for Head Start programs across the state with a reading focus,
3. Conducting a statewide “Read-A-Thon with all Head Start program, and
4. Announcing, Encouraging, and Collecting Pledge Cards showing support for the GLRC.

The HSSCO director has lead the efforts for the GLRC in working with EHS/Head Start programs by creating initiatives that would lead to a positive outcome for the campaign. The GLRC outcome is that “*By 2020, all children in AR will read on grade level by the end of the third grade.*”

***The HSSCO partnered with the Jr. League of Central Arkansas to put on a “Literacy Day” in Arkansas at the Hillary R. Clinton’s Library. The purpose of this event will be to support the GLRC and to assist children in starting their own reading library at home. Every child who attends the event will be able to take home at least 4 books with story extenders for family members to ask questions and do activities with their children. There will be activities in the areas of gross motor, reading, puppet shows, etc. This event is scheduled for April 11, 2015.***

- The Arkansas Court Team for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers meet each month to:
  1. Defining a continuum of services and how to best access early intervention services. These services will be incorporated into the case plan.
  2. The committee has established Tuesdays as the time for the post removal conferences for any new potential court team case.
  3. We established a new committee called the “Kinship Placement”. This committee is working to access what types of services are needed for relatives with permanent custody. The committee is drafting a questionnaire to ascertain what services are currently in place and which are lacking.
  4. The parent partners are working on possible grant opportunities for parent partners. They have developed new forms to use with families. These forms are being reviewed at DHS before being forwarded to OCC for legal vetting.

***The Arkansas Court team continue to meet each month to complete these goals.***

- The HSSCO director partnered with Books-A-Million (BAM) this year to secure some books for Head Start children to take home with them for the summer. BAM in North Little Rock, Hot Springs, and Fort Smith worked hard in getting patrons to donate books to Head Start children. In an effort to address the GLRC, the BAM

Book Drive collected over 400 books to give to EHS/Head Start programs to address one of the four impact areas; summer learning loss. Children who read over the summer will retain content that will improve their learning when they return in the fall. ***We will conduct this partnership and activities again in 2016 with BAM.***

- The Social Emotional Workgroup has been working diligently to complete a state social emotional strategic plan to submit to the DHS/DCC to review for the continued work that still needs to be done, especially since DCC no longer has the grant funding to support this effort. The workgroup has been meeting on a regular basis to complete this plan. The plan has been submitted to DCC as the workgroup waits for feedback and to identify what the next steps will be.
- Arkansas received a one million dollar grant from the Kellogg Foundation to create a statewide parent advisory group, pilot the existing Kindergarten Entry Assessment, and to improve and update the existing early learning standards. The grant is for two years and will be administered through the HSSCO. The HSSCO director will hire a state parent coordinator to work with the grant in completing its goals for family engagement.

***The statewide advisory council has worked hard in putting this family engagement framework together. We have identified foundation, impact areas, and family outcomes, along with strategies to assist teachers in working with families. We have a consultant from Louisiana who is doing the research and leading the efforts in putting this document together. We will complete this framework by June, 2015.***

- The HSSCO, Winthrop Rockefeller, Division for Child Care, and the Invest Early Coalition are working together to support local programs in applying for the EHS/Child Care Partnership grants. The FOA has not been released, but the state has set up meetings to share information and to give participants a chance to meet, build relationships, and to decide what, if any resources they would need from the state. These meetings have been very successful! Plus, if the commitments remain the same, Arkansas will be well represented across the state for agencies applying for the grant. ***The HSSCO/AHSA took the lead in setting up meetings to provide clarification on the EHS/CC Partnership grant when the FOA came out. WE also provided EHS training to child Care providers to paint a picture of how EHS programs are set up. We had approximately five programs to apply and three were awarded in the state of Arkansas. The HSSCO director has also participated in conference calls, set up other meetings, and visited some of the EHS/CC partnership sites. The work continues.***
- The HSSCO director is very much involved in state decisions and is definitely a team player in working with a variety of agencies and state partners in Arkansas. EHS/Head Start programs have been included in the work of several state agencies who have received grant funding (Home Visiting, Medicaid, Oral Health, etc.) to do specific work in early childhood education.

- *The HSSCO is also working with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) on Project LAUNCH, which is a project that provides funds to support and pilot what is needed in a program for infant mental health. They are piloting this project in Blytheville, Arkansas with the MCAEOC EHS/Head Start program. They will provide assistance and services to assist them in achieving their goals for infant mental health.*
- *The purpose of the CASSP Coordinating Council is to establish a structure for coordinated policy development, comprehensive planning, collaborative budgeting, accountability mechanisms and resource allocation for services to children & youth with emotional disturbance and/or behavioral disturbances and their families. It is further the intention to build on existing resources and to design and implement a coordinated service system of support for children & youth with emotional disturbance which is youth guided, child- and family-centered, and strengths- and community-based. The geographic area covered by the Council includes the entire state of Arkansas. Any eligible child in Arkansas shall have access to the CASSP process. Each Regional Planning Team will ensure that service teams are available for each county in their mental health catchment area. The HSSCO director serves as the assistant secretary for the council. The council meets every month.*
- *We have a new governor in Arkansas and we just finished our legislative session in March, 2015. Governor Asa Hutchinson is leading the way for our state and has not made any changes to our pre-school programs at this time. There was \$3 million appropriated for our state funded pre-k programs (Arkansas Better Chance).*

HSSCO – J. Govan  
Annual Report

Report Sent to:  
ACF  
DHS/DCC  
AHSA

Posted to: ECLKC & the HSES