

Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSCO) Grant Application

**OMB Information Collection Request
0970 - NEW**

Supporting Statement Part A - Justification

August 2026

Type of Request: New

Submitted By:
Office of Head Start
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Head Start State Collaboration Office (HSCO) grants are authorized under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9801 et seq.), which requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services, upon submission of a written request, to award collaboration grants to each state to facilitate coordination between Head Start programs and other state systems serving young children and families.

ACF is developing new HSCO grant application instructions to align Collaboration Office activities with current administration priorities, including improving outcomes in child welfare, strengthening family formation, supporting effective service delivery, and enhancing early childhood education systems.

To establish a common grant cycle, OHS has adjusted currently awarded HSCO grants so that all non-competitive HSCO grants will be aligned to a new grant cycle with a common start date of March 3, 2027.

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), ACF must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for this new information collection before requiring states to submit application materials.

2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The purpose of this information collection is to obtain standardized application materials from all states and territories receiving HSCO grants. The collected information will:

- Support the Office of Head Start's (OHS's) administration and oversight of HSCO grants
- Ensure consistent implementation of program objectives across states
- Document how states will coordinate Head Start with broader early childhood systems
- Align state-level activities with administration priorities and statutory requirements

The application will include brief narrative and structured responses describing planned activities, partnerships, and strategies for systems integration.

The information will be used by OHS/ACF program staff to review applications, make award decisions, and monitor implementation of grant activities.

3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

ACF will use electronic submission methods to collect application materials, minimizing respondent burden and improving efficiency. Respondents will be able to prepare and submit application materials digitally, enabling streamlined review processes.

Efforts will be made to standardize application components and provide clear instructions to reduce burden and improve the quality and consistency of responses.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

This is a new information collection associated with revised HSCO grant application instructions and is specific to the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9801 et seq.), and program objectives of HSCO grants. The information being collected is not available through other sources.

5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

Not applicable.

6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

This information collection is conducted in alignment with the HSCO grant award cycle and statutory requirements. States must submit application materials to receive funding and implement program activities.

Not collecting this information or collecting this information less frequently would prevent OHS from fulfilling its statutory responsibility to administer HSCO grants and would limit the agency's ability to ensure alignment with administration priorities and provide oversight of grant activities.

7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5

Not applicable.

8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside the Agency

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR Part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), ACF published a notice in the Federal Register announcing the agency's intention to request an OMB review of this information collection activity. This notice was published on June 12, 2026 (91 FR 35690) and provided a sixty-day period for public comment. During the notice and comment period, ACF received four comment submissions, including comments from national and state Head Start associations, HSCO representatives, and an individual commenter.

Commenters generally supported the proposed focus on strengthening HSCO leadership and increasing Head Start participation in statewide early childhood systems. Commenters requested greater flexibility to account for differences in state governance structures and HSCO organizational placement. Commenters also raised concerns that certain expectations - such as requiring a single State Advisory Council structure, characterizing the State

Collaboration Director as a lead decisionmaker, requiring direct or ongoing communication with the Governor's office, or requiring formal state leadership sign-off - could exceed the authority or control of an individual HSCO Director in some states.

ACF considered these comments in revising the application instructions. Revisions clarify that states may use governance and executive-communication pathways appropriate to their existing structures; consistently frame the State Collaboration Director as a leading partner in statewide early childhood planning and decision-making; and place responsibility for organizational support, access, and coordination on the state or recipient where those matters are outside the Director's individual control. The revised instructions also clarify the HSCO's role as a federally authorized bridge between Head Start programs and state systems, while supporting alignment with relevant state early childhood priorities, and provide greater clarity regarding meaningful integration of Head Start into statewide systems.

Commenters also raised issues related to HSCO funding and operational capacity, reciprocal coordination expectations for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and Preschool Development Grant (PDG) programs, federal communication to state leadership, access to OHS program data, State Head Start Association engagement, and potential longer-term statutory changes. These issues are broader than the information collection itself and will be considered, as appropriate, through program policy, guidance, interagency coordination, or other administrative processes rather than through additional application requirements.

One commenter also expressed concern that the estimated average burden of 10.4 hours per response may understate the time needed for multi-agency coordination and review. ACF considered this feedback in reviewing the burden estimate. The estimate in Section 12 represents an average across respondents submitting a full application and respondents for whom only a subset of information is collected, and includes time for reviewing instructions, gathering required documentation, coordinating the response, and submitting application materials. ACF has retained the 10.4-hour average burden estimate.

9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents

Not applicable.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

Not applicable.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Not applicable.

12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

Estimated Burden Hours

The HSCO Grant Application is expected to be completed by 52 respondents (one per state/territory). Each respondent will submit one application annually. The average burden hours per response takes into account both full application submission and applications where only a subset of information is collected from the respondent. The estimated average burden for completing the application, including reviewing instructions, gathering required documentation, and submitting materials, is **10.4 hours per response**.

Estimated Cost to Respondents

The cost to respondents was calculated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) occupation code for Education and Childcare Administrators, Preschool and Daycare [11-9031], with a mean hourly wage of **\$31.15** based on May 2024 data. To account for fringe benefits and overhead, this rate is doubled to **\$62.30 per hour**.

Information Collection Title	Total Number of Respondents	Total Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Burden Hours Per Response	Annual Burden Hours	Average Hourly Wage	Total Annual Cost
HSCO Grant Application	52	1	10.4	540.8	\$62.30	\$33,691.84

13. Estimates of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents and Record Keepers

There are no additional costs to respondents beyond the time required to complete and submit the application.

14. Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

The estimated annual cost to the Federal Government is \$92,300.

This amount includes the annualized staff costs associated with reviewing and approving applications submitted under this information collection. These costs are estimated at approximately 25% of 4 Federal staff at the GS-12 and GS-13 levels across OHS offices, at an average salary of \$92,300, for a total of \$92,300.

15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

This is a new information collection.

16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule

There are no plans to publish the information submitted.

17. Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate

Not applicable.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

Not applicable.