

## HRA Head Start / Early Head Start Annual Report 2023-24

Dear HRA Community, Partners, and Supporters,

We are excited to share with you the annual report for HRA of New Britain's Head Start and Early Head Start programs for the fiscal year 2023-24. This report reflects the collaborative efforts of our dedicated staff, Board members, families, community partners, and supporters, all of whom play a vital role in ensuring the success of our programs. This report provides a comprehensive overview of our program's funding, services, achievements, and ongoing initiatives as we continue our commitment to serving children and families in our community.



Each year, we make this report publicly available through our website ([www.hranbct.org](http://www.hranbct.org)) to ensure transparency and accessibility for all stakeholders.

We are grateful for your continued support and partnership as we work together to empower children and families through high-quality early childhood education and family services. Your commitment makes a lasting difference in our community.

Respectfully,

Dr. Marlo Greponne Executive Director

Mary Fortier HRA Board President

Amy Griswold Director of Early Childhood

HRA of New Britain

### Program Funding

HRA relied on a total of \$5,725,994 in public funds to conduct its Early Head Start and Head Start programs. HRA received \$4,288,703 for Head Start and \$1,437,291 for Early Head Start from the Department of U.S. Health & Human Services' Administration for Children and Families over the program year. We did not rely on any private funds.

### Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025



The proposed budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year is structured to ensure comprehensive service delivery aligned with established goals and operational requirements across Head Start and Early Head Start centers. Estimated expenses are categorized to support:

- **Program Operations:** Funding will support daily operations at multiple centers, including staffing, materials, facilities maintenance, and other necessary resources to ensure safe, high-quality early education environments.



- **Personnel and Staffing:** A significant portion of the budget is dedicated to maintaining competitive salaries and benefits for staff members, including teachers, support staff, and administrative personnel. Additional resources are allocated for professional development and training to ensure compliance with Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) and enhance program quality.

- **Educational and Developmental Resources:** Continued investment in evidence-based curricula such as Creative Curriculum for preschoolers and infants/toddlers, as well as assessment tools including Teaching Strategies Gold Online, CLASS, and HOVRS. These resources are essential for ensuring school readiness and positive child outcomes.

- **Family and Community Engagement:** Funding is allocated to support parent engagement activities, including virtual platforms, family assessments, goal-setting activities, and resource-sharing to promote self-sufficiency and lifelong learning.



- **Health and Nutrition Services:** Ensuring children receive adequate health screenings, dental exams, and nutrition services remains a priority. Resources are directed toward maintaining high standards of care and accessibility for all enrolled children.
- **Facilities and Infrastructure:** Funding will also address facility maintenance and improvements, particularly in ensuring safe and welcoming environments for all children and families served.
- **Data and Evaluation:** Continued monitoring and evaluation efforts to measure program effectiveness, inform continuous improvement processes, and ensure alignment with strategic goals.

This proposed budget reflects a comprehensive approach aimed at sustaining high-quality services, expanding access for underserved families, and promoting positive developmental outcomes for children enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.



### Children and Family Service Numbers

- **Head Start:** 349 children from 324 families in 2023-24. Average monthly enrollment: 103% of funded enrollment. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of enrolled children were income-eligible.
- **Early Head Start:** 40 children from 40 families in 2023-24. Average monthly enrollment: 71% of funded enrollment. All enrolled children (100%) were income-eligible.

### ACF Review and Financial Audit

In 2022, ACF conducted the most recent monitoring review of our Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The review had positive remarks for all of our program areas.

Financial audits of HRA's federal funds, including Early Head Start and Head Start funds, had no findings.

### Health Services

- **Head Start:** 95% of children were up-to-date on preventive and primary health care; 36.7% received professional dental exams.
- **Early Head Start:** 77.5% of children were up-to-date on preventive and primary health care; 47.5% received professional dental exams.



### Parent Involvement Activities

- **Head Start:** 298 parents participated in the Parent Meetings, i.e. Parent Committee and Policy Council. Ninety (90) program fathers engaged in family assessment and goal-setting activities.
- **Early Head Start:** Seven (7) program fathers participated in family assessment activities.



### Preparing Children for Kindergarten

HRA relied on Creative Curriculum to teach children in its Head Start center-based classrooms. The curriculum covered literacy and numeracy fundamentals. Teaching Strategies Gold Online was used to assess children's progress. Creative Curriculum was also used to teach infants and toddlers in Early Head Start center-based classrooms.

### Community Assessment Summary

Our most recent Community Assessment identified key trends, demographics, and needs within the communities we serve. This analysis informed our program's planning and service delivery strategies to effectively address areas such as homelessness, food insecurity, education, and employment. Key findings include:

- Significant demand for high-quality early education services, particularly for low-income families.
- Increased demand for dual-language instruction and culturally responsive educational resources.
- High levels of food insecurity, especially in specific neighborhoods.
- Increased need for wraparound services, including health care access and employment readiness programs.
- Continued emphasis on improving transitions from Early Head Start to Head Start and from Head Start to kindergarten.



The assessment continues to guide our program's strategic initiatives and partnerships aimed at addressing these identified needs.

### Head Start on Housing Initiative

Recognizing the increased prevalence of homelessness among families post-pandemic, HRA launched the **Head Start on Housing Initiative**, a collaborative effort with the Connecticut Department of Housing, Office of Early Childhood, Head Start Association of Connecticut, and area emergency shelter providers. This initiative accelerates the process of securing housing for homeless families with children in Head Start and Early Head Start.



Since its inception in December 2022, Head Start on Housing has successfully housed **21 families and 48 children**. Additionally, **eight more families** are currently searching for homes with vouchers provided through this initiative. By eliminating bureaucratic delays and providing vouchers directly, this program ensures that families like Maria B.'s—who transitioned from homelessness to stable housing—receive the support they need promptly.

This effort exemplifies HRA's commitment to addressing critical community needs by offering innovative, compassionate, and efficient services that foster stability and well-being for families.

### Additional Information Required by the Secretary

Ongoing initiatives include:

- The development of strategies to increase enrollment among underserved populations.
- Continued efforts to expand culturally relevant resources and improve access for dual language learners.
- Enhancements to parent engagement efforts, with an emphasis on accessibility through virtual platforms.

