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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2019 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

### Community Action of Southeast Iowa Head Start/Early Head Start Programs

#### The Agency

Community Action of Southeast Iowa is the Grantee Agency for the Head Start and Early Head Start programs in southeast Iowa. The service area includes the Iowa counties of Des Moines, Henry, Lee and Louisa. Children are served through center-based classrooms located in Burlington (Des Moines County), Mount Pleasant (Henry County), Fort Madison (North Lee County), and Keokuk (South Lee County).

The Head Start (HS) program is funded for 264 children and the Early Head Start (EHS) program is funded for 70 children. State Shared Visions funds partially fund the six full day Head Start classrooms. These funds serve as “wrap around” funds that extend the program hours for those children whose parents work or are in school/training. The Head Start program also receives funding from Early Childhood Iowa to assist with transportation costs in Lee, Des Moines, and Henry Counties.

Children ages 3-5 years are served through one of three center-based school year program options in Head Start: full day, part day, or duration. Full day programs are for children whose parents are working, in school, or in training. Part day and duration classrooms do not require parents to be working or in school, and these programs may offer transportation. The Early Head Start program is a full day, full year center-based program for children 0-3 years of age whose parents are working or in school/training as well as pregnant women.

	Des Moines County	Henry County	North Lee County	South Lee County	Louisa County	Total Slots
<b>Total HS Slots:</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>264</b>
<b>HS Part Day</b>	76	16	30	30		152
<b>HS Duration</b>				16		16
<b>HS Full Day</b>	48	16	16	16		96
<b>Total EHS Slots:</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70</b>

#### Summary of the Community Assessment Purpose & Process

Federal Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.11, section b, *community wide strategic planning and needs assessment (community assessment)*, states that each Head Start and Early Head Start grantee agency must conduct a comprehensive community assessment at least once over the five-year grant period. Information gathered through the community assessment process is used to guide the Head Start grantee in determining its philosophy, program objectives, and the design of its service delivery systems.

The process of assessing the needs of Community Action of Southeast Iowa Head Start/Early Head Start service area for the 2019-2020 grant applications involved a number of steps.

- A committee of staff, Policy Council members, Board members and community partners was established.
- The committee reviewed Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.11 section b in order to become familiar with the minimum areas to be addressed during the community assessment process.
- The committee gathered data using a variety of methods including: online research, phone calls, emails, surveys, focus groups, etc.
- The committee analyzed the data and identified strengths as well as areas of concern.

## **Major Findings**

In the analysis of the data that was collected, there are certain trends or concerns that impact the entire service area of the program. Other findings are specific to certain counties. Major findings are listed below.

### **Des Moines County**

- Transportation is a great need in Des Moines County
- Childcare options are plentiful for all ages except infants
- Housing: High wait list for low income housing in Burlington; low rent housing authority taking fewer apps; section 8 years long wait list
- Shortage of CDLs in area
- Significant Increase in child abuse numbers
- Reintegration programs/transitions link needed for incarcerated families
- Lots of parents working part time jobs with no benefits
- High number of public school students who are homeless

### **Henry County**

- Parts of county are a childcare desert
- Housing for low income limited; low income moving more into city limits
- rehab support/substance abuse – unmet need – ADDS office, hospital 24 hour hold only
- Shortage of CDLs in area (HS needs a driver too!)
- Increase in child abuse numbers
- Reintegration programs/transitions link needed for incarcerated families

### **Lee County**

- Increase in child abuse numbers
- All parents in the home working number high; median household income lower than the state
- Unemployment rate down from previous years, but still higher than the state average
- Drug crime rates high; rehab support/substance abuse support– unmet need
- Reintegration programs/transitions link needed for incarcerated families
- Housing-section 8 not taking applications; low rent houses have waitlist
- Parts of county a childcare desert
  - Fort Madison waitlist and area data reflects need for additional HS/EHS slots but we do not have the space (current building in bad shape)
- Shortage of CDLs in area (HS needs drivers too!)
- Lots of parents working part time jobs with no benefits
- Working poor-over 100% poverty but still in poverty conditions

### **Louisa County**

- Continued influx in Burmese population
- housing – very limited housing available; housing regulations are not up to standards
- There is a need for home childcare providers in Columbus Junction
- Increase in child abuse numbers

## Recommendations

### **Recruitment Areas/Slots/Service Delivery Option**

- Des Moines County:
  - Maintain the center in Burlington
  - Extend the recruitment area to the outlying/rural area by adding an additional bus route
  - Increase EHS slots; Switch one HS part day to a duration; switch one HS dual (2 classes) to 2 durations
- Henry County:
  - Maintain the center in Mount Pleasant
  - Switch existing part day to a duration
- Lee County/Fort Madison:
  - Maintain the center in Fort Madison
  - Add an additional HS duration classroom and additional EHS slots
  - Relocate Eichacker classrooms (within Fort Madison) since the current building is not in great condition and will not accommodate additional classrooms
- Lee County/Keokuk:
  - Maintain the center in Keokuk
  - Expand from part day hours to duration hours; increase EHS slots
- Louisa County:
  - Possible need for services if families qualify as homeless (otherwise mostly over income). Need would primarily be for part day center-based services for 3 year olds.

### **Consider how our program can respond to the increased child abuse rates across our area.**

- Training needed for staff:
  - Trauma Informed Care
  - child abuse awareness
  - Tall Cop Says Stop
- Add additional child abuse curriculum
- Consider longer duration hours

### **Strengthen relationships with:**

- School districts
  - Develop/Improve Community Partnerships with school districts
  - Encourage districts to allow HS to serve children under 100% poverty or at least dual enroll children so that they receive HS's comprehensive services.
  - Find a way to share information with SWVPP teachers (who have Elem. Ed degrees) about child development and best practices for preschool children.
- Foster care coordinators and support personnel
- Homeless Board
- McKinney-Vento liaisons at the schools
- Community
  - Attend interagency meetings
  - Have a presence in and continue monitoring need for services in Louisa County
  - Continue monitoring need for services in Mediapolis

### **Transportation-assist parents in attaining CDL**