

# SELF-ASSESSMENT



# INTRODUCTION

Annually, Head Start programs must conduct a self assessment of their effectiveness, progress in meeting program goals and objectives, and in implementing Federal Regulations. The Self-Assessment must measure the agency's strengths and areas for growth, allowing for continuous improvement of the program to enhance the impact for children, families, and communities.

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## TRI-COUNTY HEAD START

Tri-County Head Start (TCHS) began in 1972, and currently serves 908 children in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren County with Head Start (3-5 year olds), and Early Head Start (0-3 year olds) programs. TCHS operates both center based and home based programming in 23 centers and 46 classrooms. The organization is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Total Funded Enrollment - 908 (561)

Head Start - 704 (409)

Early Head Start -  
204 (152)

Head Start  
Center Based  
694  
(409)

Head Start  
Home Based  
10  
(0)

Early Head  
Start  
Center Based  
101  
(78)

Early Head  
Start  
Home Based  
103  
(74)

# CONTEXT FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Tri-County Head Start began the first year of their 5-year grant cycle on February 1st, 2020. The Self-Assessment is conducted on the same timeline as the fiscal year and the grant year.

The Self-Assessment process was designed with the assistance of Training and Technical Assistance professionals, input from staff, and the input and approval from the governance team. This report includes ongoing implementation and had been approved by the governance team.

Inclusion of staff, families, and community is prioritized during the Self-Assessment process.



# 5-YEAR GOALS

Every 5 years, each program decides on BROAD goals and initial short term SMART objectives, annually reviewing and revising if necessary. The program goals for the 2020-2025 grant cycle are as follows:



## Staff

Tri-County Head Start will enhance strengths-based professional development and training opportunities for all staff members to maximize their potential and quality of services.



## Community

Tri-County Head Start will increase community awareness that we are leaders in Early Childhood Education.



## Locations

Tri-County Head Start will improve access to community resources and services for the children and families we serve.

# METHODOLOGY

## Pre-assessment

The directors team on a regular basis reviewed data as it related to the organizations program and school readiness goals, in addition to any other agency data. The information is presented to the Board and Policy Council on a monthly basis and shared with staff.

## Process Design

The self-assessment process was designed with the assistance and input from a T/TA professional, staff, and the Board and Policy Council. The process is reviewed on an annual basis with changes and adaptations being made as necessary.

## Team Engagement

Staff, Board, and Policy Council members are invited to take part of this annual process. The team for this report included the CEO/Executive director, the directors team, Policy Council members, Board members, and staff from each department.

## Analyze & Dialogue

During a meeting, the group reviewed the data, and were given the opportunity to ask questions. They then made comments on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and developed recommendations.

## Recommendations

From the broad list of possible recommendations, major themes were developed to narrow the focus and establish actionable recommendations for the next grant year.

# SELF-ASSESSMENT DATA TOOLS

## **Monitoring Chart**

This chart was designed during the creation of the self-assessment plan and is a document completed on an ongoing basis by the Directors team that reports progress in each goal department.

## **Family Survey**

The Family Survey was sent out as questionnaire in March and had over 120 parent responses.

## **Staff Survey**

The Staff Survey was sent out in a questionnaire in March and had 127 responses.

## **Self-Assessment Team - Data Exploration**

During the March Self-Assessment Meeting the data from the above tools and department specific data was combined and analyzed and recommendations were developed.

# KEY INSIGHTS

The Self-Assessment process included examining data from key areas of the organization including program goals, the Staff and Family surveys, school readiness goals, and community needs.

Key Area	Strength	Opportunity For Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organizational Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our staff satisfaction is at 78% while the national average is only 65%</li> <li>55% of our staff have been employed with us for more than 5 years</li> <li>57% of our staff were Head Start parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our staff satisfaction rates have declined by 16% since 2020</li> <li>We are losing most staff at their 2.6 year mark</li> <li>Staff stress levels are continuing to rise</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locations and Partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In areas where we have demonstrated our need well, we have good partnerships for buildings with low rent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>With expanding state funded Prek, school systems are needing their classrooms back to allocate space.</li> <li>The high rent we are paying is often not for quality facilities in quality locations</li> </ul>



# KEY INSIGHTS

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Key Area	Strength	Opportunity For Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Family Engagement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Families feel like we are listening to their suggestions</li><li>96% of parents feel our locations are safe.</li><li>100% of parents are comfortable raising issues with their teachers</li><li>Families feel we are helping prepare their students for Kindergarten</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Families need Monday-Friday care for their children</li><li>Families need care that works for their work schedules</li><li>Families are frustrated with classroom closures due to lack of staff</li><li>Families need more location options for Early Head Start</li></ul>



# RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

## Action Items

- TCHS will focus on retaining current, experienced, staff and recruiting new staff by developing a more robust onboarding and training system. We will also continue to find ways to reduce staff stress due to pre and post pandemic changes.
- Continue rebranding and outreach efforts in the community to build partnerships so we can find better quality locations in central areas at more affordable rates.
- Increasing staff engagement with families to make families feel more comfortable and welcome and rebuild trust in the organization. This will increase attendance and participation with TCHS hosted events and trainings, as well as parent committee meetings and Policy Council.

### Responsible Staff

Directors Team  
Board and Policy  
Council

### Time Frame

Complete steps by  
January 2024

# ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- Developing a better training and onboarding system will allow staff to be more prepared on their first day in classrooms. They will have a good working relationship with their teaching team, and be more prepared to serve our students. This leads to less closures, less turnover, and improved safety.
- Building better relationships in the community will allow us to be on the forefront of their minds when allocating new spaces and building new buildings. They will easily recognize the need for quality childcare and the impact it can have on their economy. This will also lead to TCHS being able to be a part of more community events, leading to larger recruitment of new students and families.
- Making our families more comfortable and building more trust in our organization will impact our biggest recruitment standard, word of mouth. It will also allow us to have a greater impact on our families lives as they will be more likely to attend trainings, events, and meetings with their Family Advocates. Parents who are more involved are more likely to join our Policy Council and Parent Committee meetings, and then in turn become staff members.



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