



Northern Panhandle Head Start, Inc.

Engaging Young Children and their Families in a Comprehensive Early Childhood Development Program

Annual Administrative Report 2024-2025



Message From the Executive Director

As the Executive Director of Northern Panhandle Head Start, I am proud to present our 2024–2025 Annual Report to our families, staff, and valued community stakeholders. Guided by our vision — “Building Foundations for Life-long Growth and Development” — this report offers a snapshot of a successful year filled with meaningful progress toward our school readiness and program goals. It reflects the heart of our mission: to provide a high-quality, family-focused program uniquely designed to prepare children for learning and life.

As I enter another year in this role, my focus remains on three key priorities: supporting staff wellness, closing academic and social-emotional gaps for children, and addressing the diverse and evolving needs of the families we serve.

I am privileged to lead an exceptional team of professionals who are dedicated to our shared mission. Through data-driven planning, responsive support, and intentional instruction, our staff work diligently to ensure children gain the knowledge and skills needed for long-term success. Their commitment to creating a safe, nurturing, and enriching learning environment is the foundation of our continued growth.

To our Head Start families — thank you for your trust, involvement, and partnership throughout the year. Your collaboration has been essential to our progress, and I remain committed to working alongside you, providing the resources, strategies, and support needed to help our children, families, and staff thrive.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to serve with our staff, Policy Council, and Board of Directors. Together, as a united Head Start community, we hold fast to the belief that it truly takes a village to raise a child — and I couldn't be prouder of the village we've built.

Warmly,

Jackie Bell

Jackie Bell, M.Ed.
Executive Director



Governing Bodies

NPBS Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is instrumental to NPBS's operations as it has legal and fiscal responsibility for administering and overseeing the agency including safeguarding federal funds, adoption of governance practices, and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Lisa Schmitt - President	Maclaine Murad
Linda Myers - Vice President	Travis Haught - PC Chairperson
Eleanor White - Secretary	Kari Turvey-Gantz - PC Vice Chairperson
Rod Lydick - Treasurer	
Tami Alfred - Parliamentarian	

NPBS Policy Council

Policy Council is made up of Head Start and Early Head Start parents and community members who lead and make decisions about the program. The Policy Council is made up of parent representatives elected by parent meeting groups to participate in monthly meetings with program management. An alternate representative is elected to sit in if a representative is unable. The Policy Council Chair and Vice Chair also serves on the Board of Directors.

Travis Haught - Chairperson
Kari Turvey-Gantz - Vice Chairperson
Breanne Dietrich - Secretary
Trisha Lacefield - Treasurer
Kori Tomic - Parliamentarian

Community Assessment Summary

NPBS is funded to serve 507 children throughout Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, and Wetzel counties in West Virginia. NPBS provides Early Head Start, Head Start, Child Care Partnership and Home Visiting services through MIHOW & MIECHV. An annual Community Assessment is compiled and updated yearly with an in-depth assessment taking place every 5 years.

This report shows that all five counties continue to see a decrease in the population. The state of West Virginia continues to have the highest drug overdose rate in the nation. Four of the five counties NPBS serves are considered High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas. The Northern Panhandle, which consists of all five of the counties NPBS serves continues to have some of the highest NAS rates in the state. The agency has seen a slight decrease in the number of Child Abuse & Neglect Reports.

The number of children estimated to be eligible for our services has decreased in three of the five counties. This estimate considers the number of live births in each county which has dropped in two of the five counties as well as the current child poverty rate which has decreased in two of the five counties. Unemployment rates in each of the five counties are lower than reported the previous year. Three of the five counties reported an unemployment rate that is higher than the statewide average of 4.3%.

Health outcomes for the state of West Virginia continue to be poor with the state holding the highest rate of obesity in the nation. Along with the high rates of hypertension, diabetes, and depression. The agency has a contract with the Village Network to provide Mental Health Services to the children and families enrolled in our program. Local hospitals have implemented Mental Health Services to help fill the gap in our area. WV Birth to Three and the local LEAs provide services to the children with identified disabilities. The agency has partnerships throughout all five counties with the local county school boards and provides services to families through collaborative classrooms. As well as partnerships with five local child care centers located in four of the five counties.

~Community Assessment data compiled by
Ashley Benson, Administrative Assistant
The full Community Assessment can be provided on request.

Individual Benefactors

Harold Burech
Adam Koller
Thomas & Linda Myers+

Foundations, Corporations, & Organizations

American Tire
Dominos PSL Enterprises
The Experience Church
H.E. Neuman
Olivia Scott Foundation
Richardson Copy Concepts
Snodgrass
Target
Wheeling-Nippon Steel
Wheeling Office Supply

Administration

Jackie Bell,
Executive Director

Amber Boring,
Education & Training Manager

Gina Wendel,
Head Start Manager

Beth Ott,
Early Head Start Manager

Amanda Blon,
Human Resources Manager

Cheryl Santimarino,
Family & Community Partnerships Manager

Anna Sibert,
Fiscal Manager

Ashley Benson,
Administrative Assistant

*NPBS Inc. Employee +NPBS Inc. Board of Directors



Northern Panhandle Head Start, Inc.

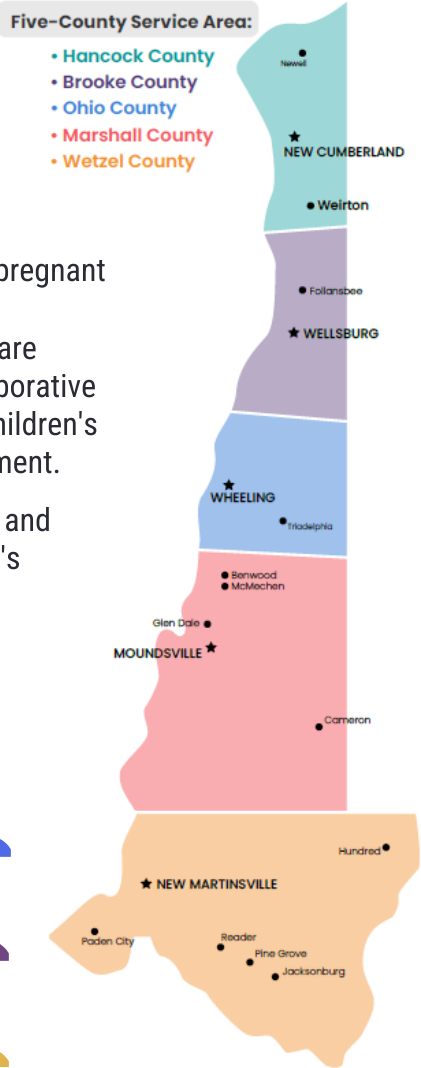
Building Foundations For Life-Long Growth & Development

Overview

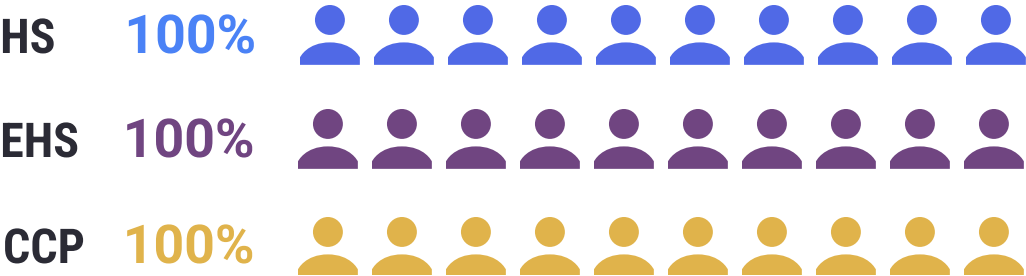
Northern Panhandle Head Start promotes the school readiness of children from eligible families by providing a comprehensive program that addresses their cognitive, nutritional, health, social, and emotional needs.

NPHS's program is a combination of Early Head Start (EHS) funding which serves pregnant women, infants, toddlers, and their families, Head Start (HS) funding which serves preschool aged children (ages 3-5) and their families, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP) funding which serves infants and toddlers enrolled in collaborative child care centers. The program furnishes a learning environment that supports children's growth in literacy, language, mathematics, science, social, and emotional development.

NPHS emphasizes the parent's role as the child's first and most important teacher and builds strong relationships with the child's parents and family to increase the child's chances for success.



Average Monthly Enrollment

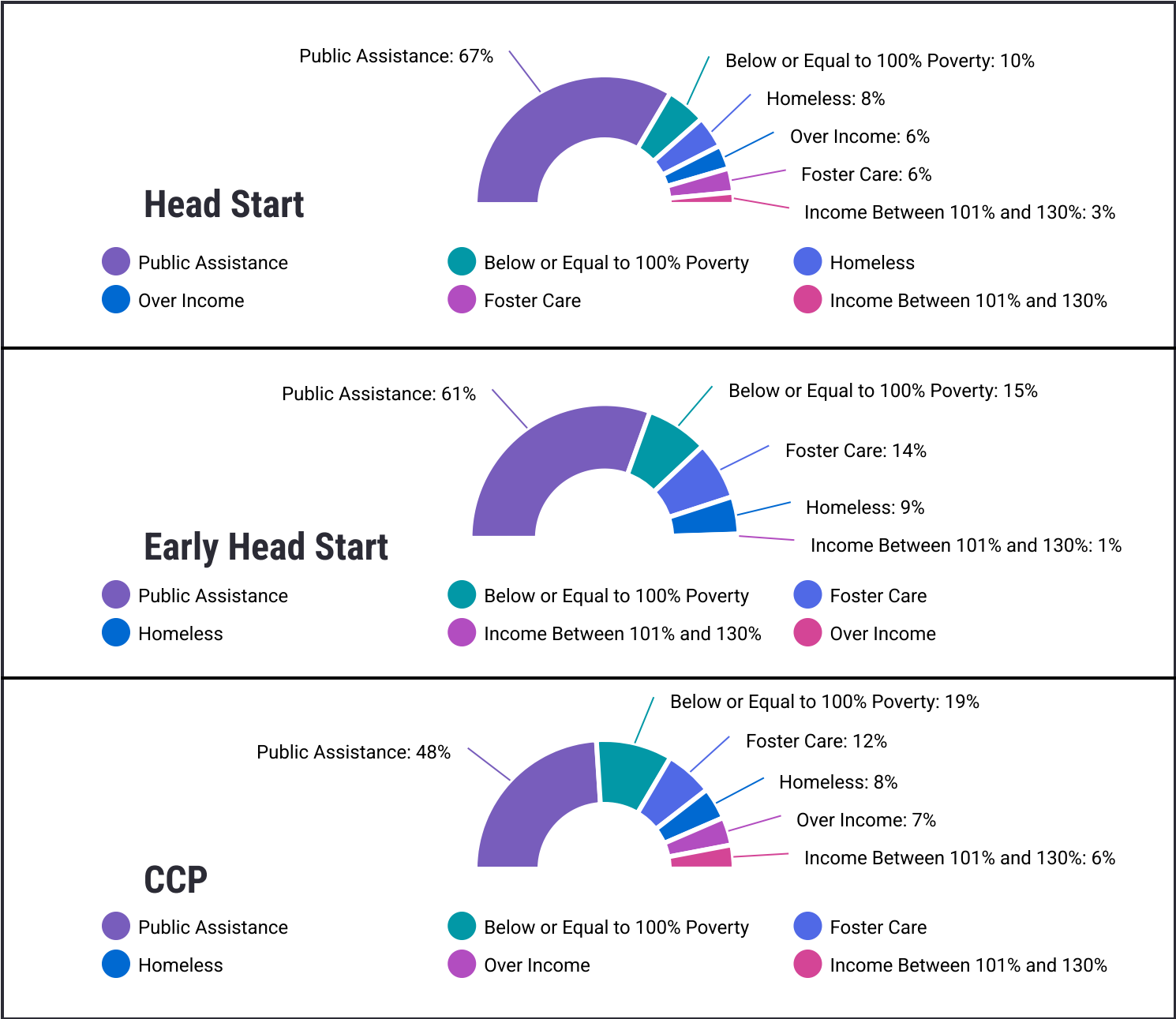


Federal Funding



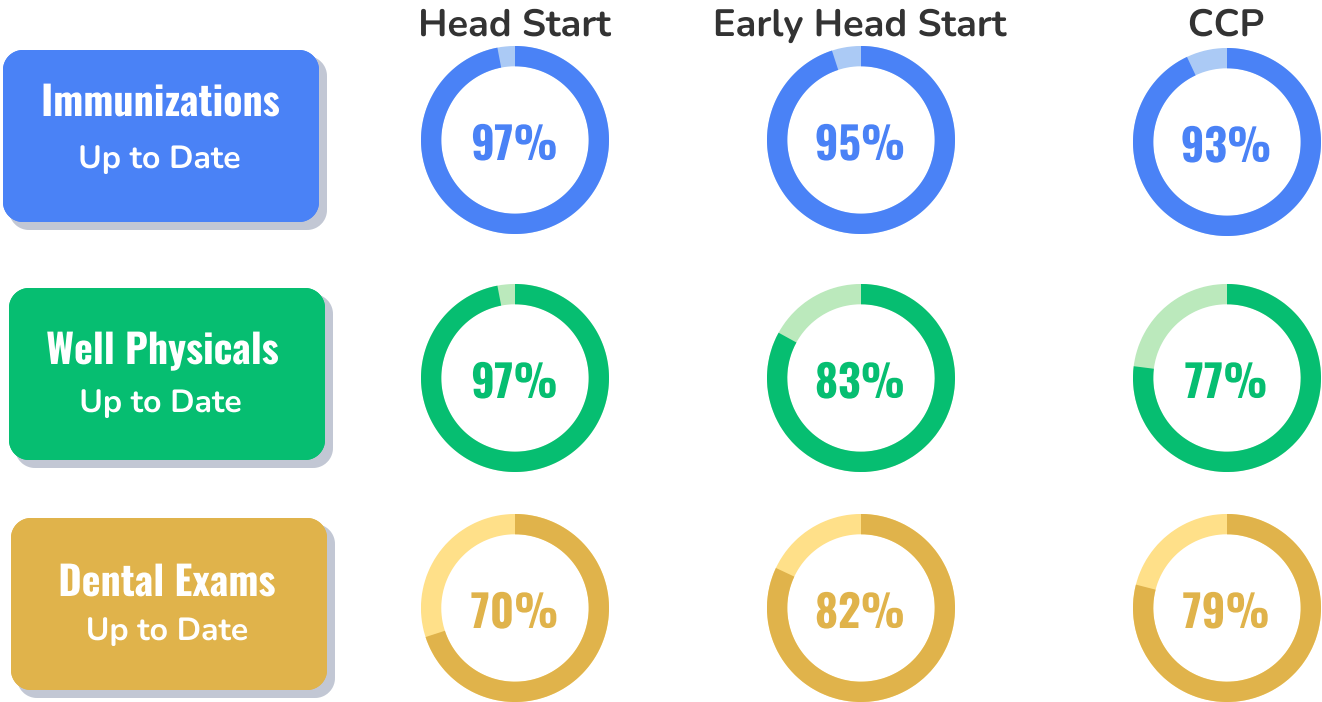
Enrollment	Funded	Served
Head Start	300	372
Early Head Start	85	145
EHS-Child Care Partnership	72	85
MIHOW/MIECHV	50	75
Total	507	677

Primary Eligibility at Time of Enrollment



Health & Nutrition Services

NPBS Health Department focuses on educating, screening, and advocating for the health of Head Start, Early Head Start, and Child Care Partnership children and families. Our goal is to ensure that each child receives individual, appropriate, and timely services to help meet their health needs by offering the following services:



Pre-Natal Services

Education for women enrolled in our program focusing on the importance of healthy mom and healthy baby.



4
Prenatal Enrollments

8 current
Community Health Professionals

Health Advisory Committee

Health Advisory committee meets throughout the program year to discuss policies, health issues within the community, and address health service challenges along with establishing solutions.

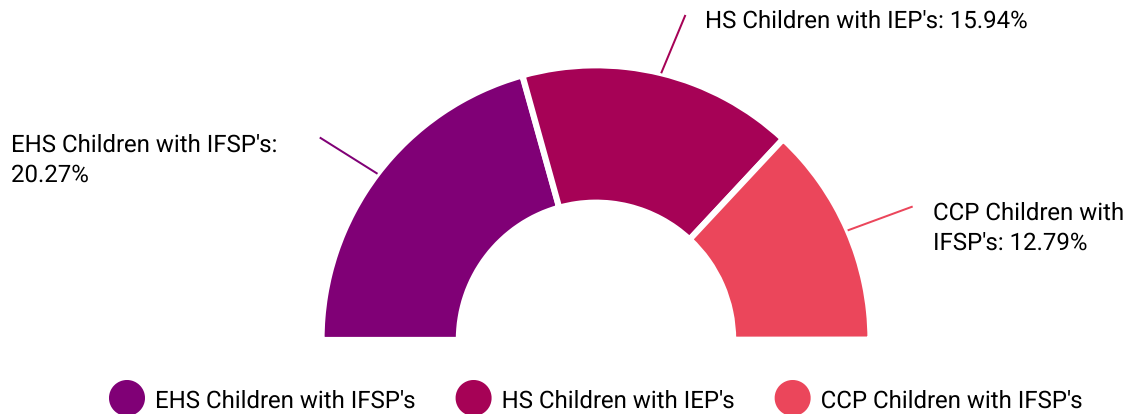
Nutrition Services

Nutritional meals are essential to healthy growth & development. Nutrition services include nutrition assessments, nutritious meals with modifications for children with special dietary needs, and education to empower parents to help them make healthy choices for themselves and their children. Our program provides two nutritious meals and one healthy snack per day following CACPF guidelines.

Number of meals served as of April 2025
45,886

Disabilities Services

NPHS's goal in this area is to ensure that the developmental and social-emotional needs of each child are met, and their families are supported and effectively included in the full range of program activities. Each child participates in developmental and social-emotional screenings that are developmentally appropriate for young children aged birth through five. We use the results of these screenings to refer children to Part B or Part C agencies, who provide early intervention and special needs services.

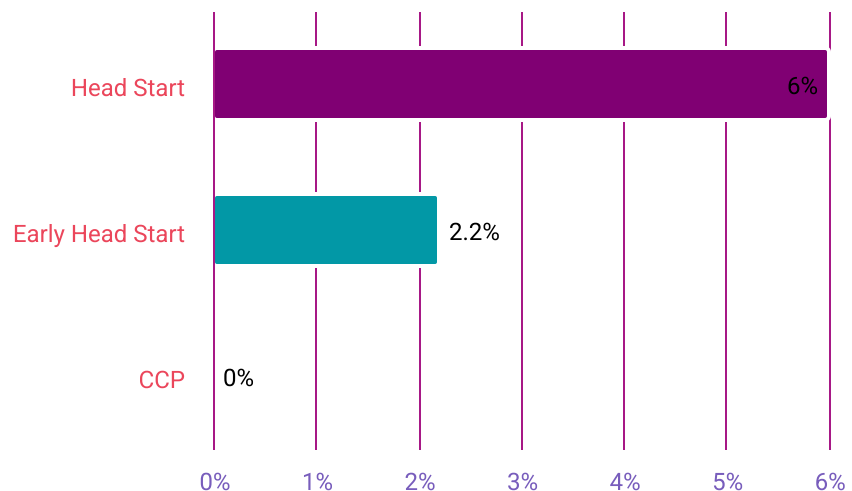
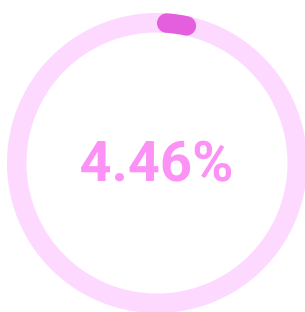


Mental Health

Mental health support for children and families is a passion for this program. NPHS's mental health component is also supported through a partnership with the Village Network who offers individualized support for children and their families and facilitates referrals for outside mental health services when needed

Children Receiving Services for Mental Health

Children Referred for Mental Health Support



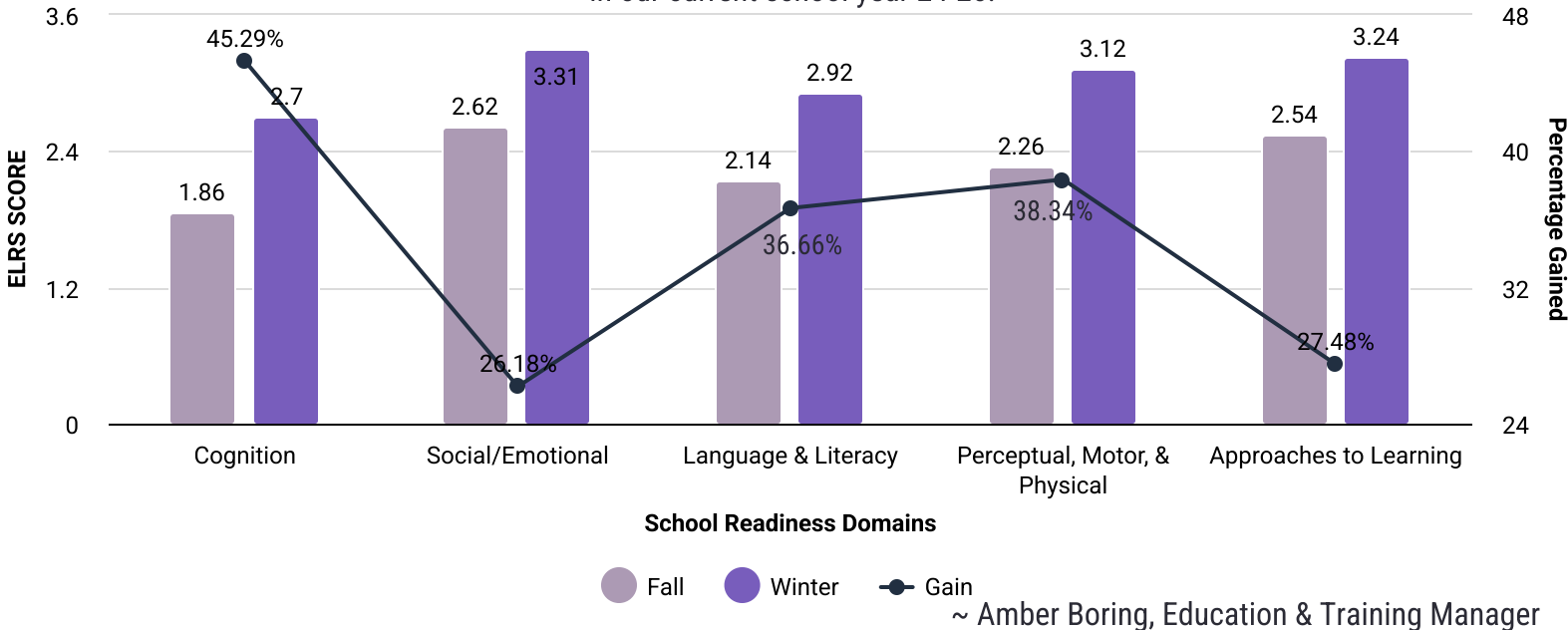
~ Amanda Ames, Child Development/Disabilities Coordinator

Child Development Outcomes & School Readiness

NPHS School Readiness Goals encompass the foundational learning experiences that prepare children to be school ready. School readiness means children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children’s learning, and schools are ready for children.

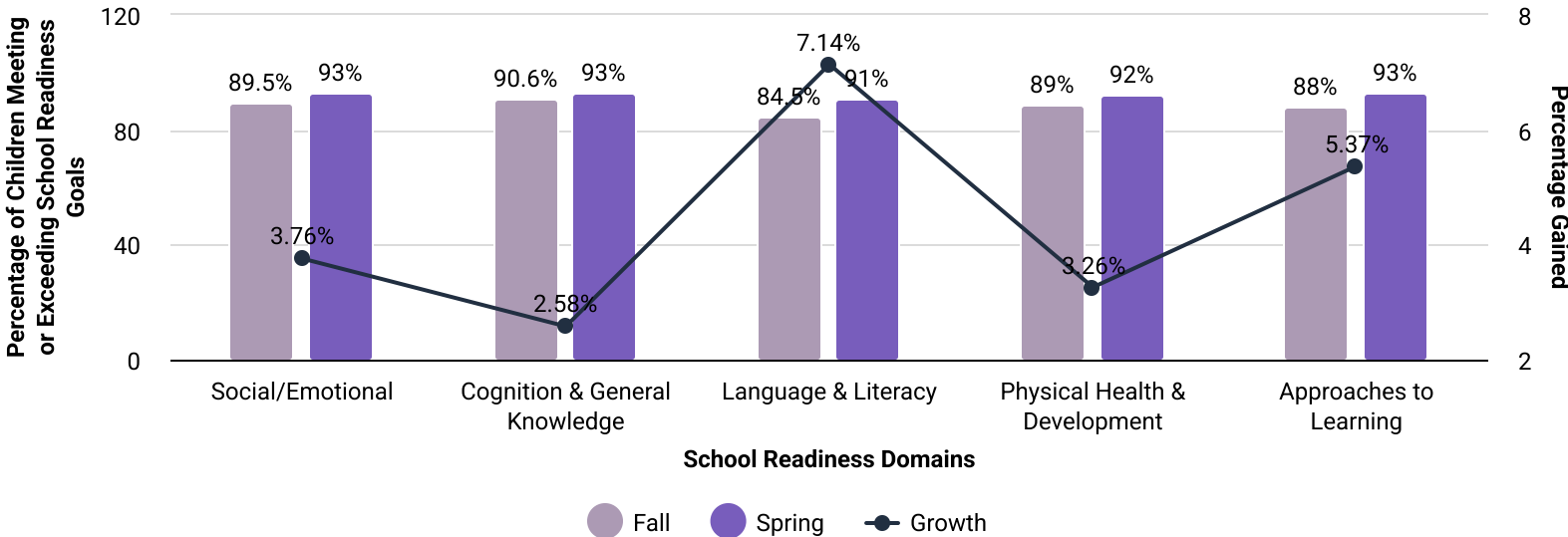
Head Start

Head Start Child Development Outcomes (serving children ages 3-5) show results of child assessment data using the Early Learning Reporting System (ELRS), which follows the guidance of the West Virginia Early Learning Standards Framework and Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework and provides the continuum for learning for preschoolers. The ELRS data identifies where the program needs improvement to provide a quality education for all children. The winter Early Learning Reporting System (ELRS) checkpoint finished March 2025. The graph shows the percentage gained from Fall to Winter in our current school year 24-25.



Early Head Start

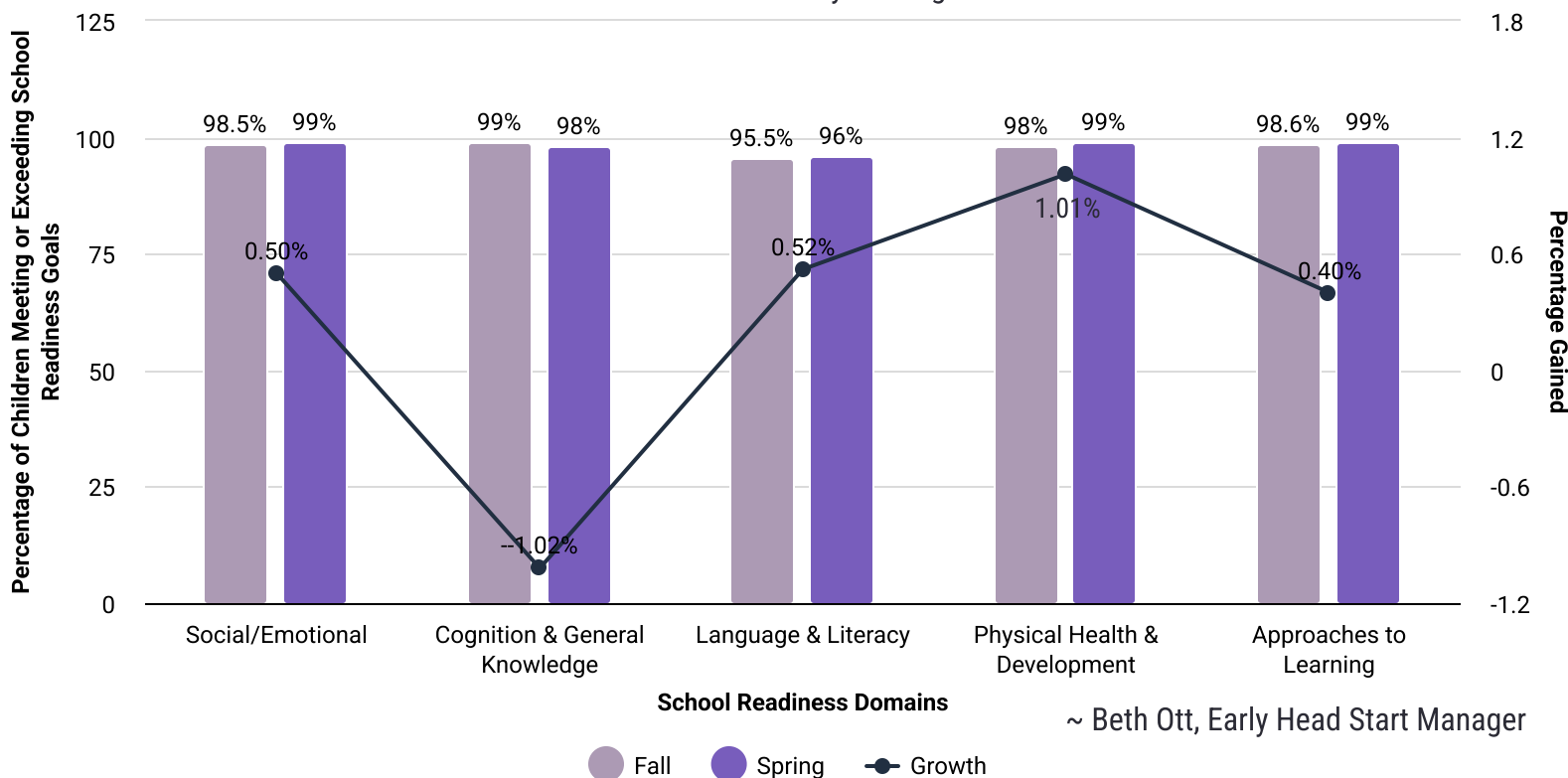
Early Head Start Child Development Outcomes (serving children ages birth to three) show results of child assessment data using Teaching Strategies Gold data which is collected via observing the child at play, exploring their environment, and through interactions with peers and adults. The following data shows the percentage of children meeting EHS School Readiness Goals.



Child Care Partnership

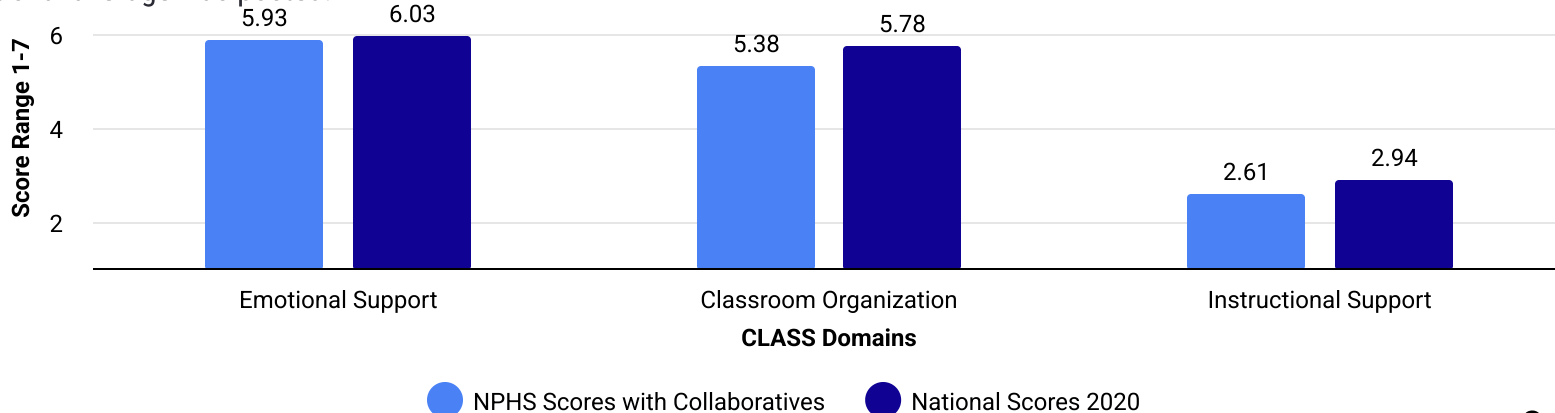
The Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Program provides Early Head Start services to families attending child care centers. NPHS collaborates with five child care centers in the northern panhandle. Our current partners include The Children's Academy LLC in Hancock County, Little Bear of Weirton in Brooke County, Holy Family in Ohio County, Glen Dale Child Development Center, and Higher Hills Children's Center in Marshall County. There have been 74 child care teachers who have completed the CDA or ACDS program since July 1, 2015. Through the EHS-CCP program we have steadily maintained an average of 64% child care subsidy funding for the 72 enrolled children.

CCP School Readiness



Head Start CLASS Scores

CLASS stands for Classroom Assessment Scoring System and is used by Head Start Programs across the country to measure quality teacher child interactions in preschool classrooms. Research shows classrooms with a score closer to a 7 within the three domains, the higher quality the interactions and more successful children will be academically and socially moving into their elementary school years and beyond. Head Start requires, at a minimum, an Emotional Support score of 5, a Classroom Organization score of 5, and an Instructional Support score of 2.5. They recommend for quality purposes an Emotional Support score of 6, a Classroom Organization score of 6, and an Instructional Support score of 3. The scores listed are from the fall observations as the spring observations are still taking place. The national scores are from 2020 as that is the last year a national average was posted.



Family and Community Engagement

Family involvement is the heart of a child's success in life. Parents and caregivers are a child's first most important and lifelong teacher and supporter of achievement. NPHS strives to work with the whole family to improve children's academic and social outcomes that lead to better futures for all. Adults in the family are encouraged to participate in classroom activities, attend parent meetings, help make policy decisions for our program, and enjoy all the fun events. Parents are empowered to develop a goal for their family and work toward that goal throughout the program year with the help of our staff.

Volunteers (parents, family members, and community members) have volunteered 33,681.04 hours collectively to support our mission!

33,681.04 Hours

Parent Meeting Participation

33%

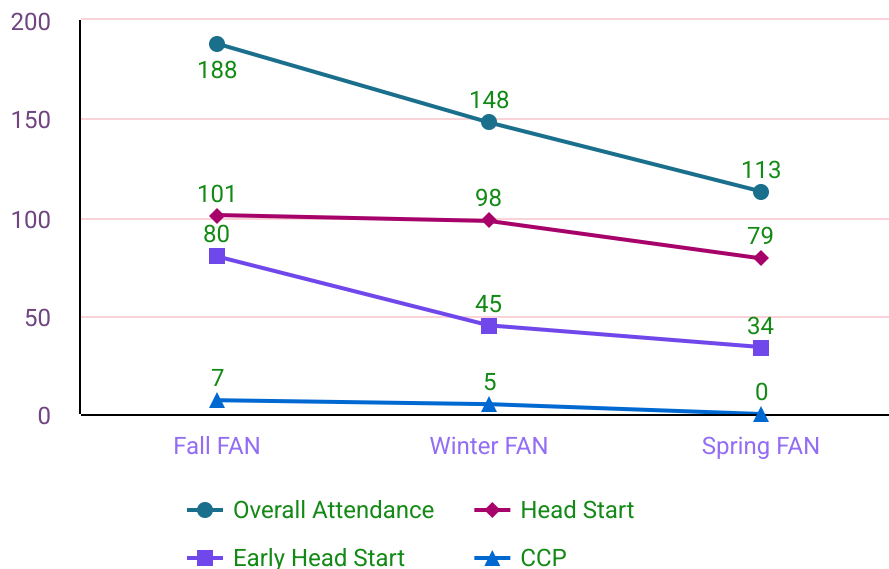


Family Partnership Goals Established

89%



Family Activity Night Attendance

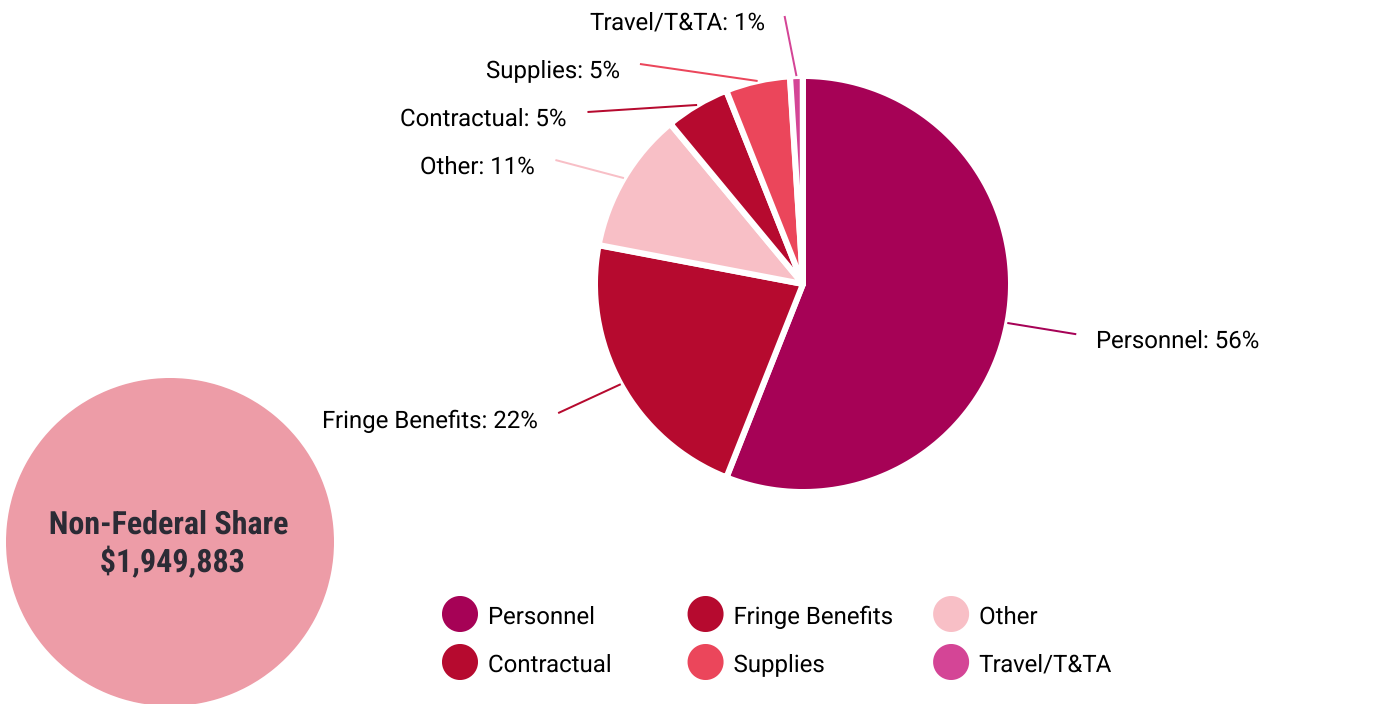


Community Involvement

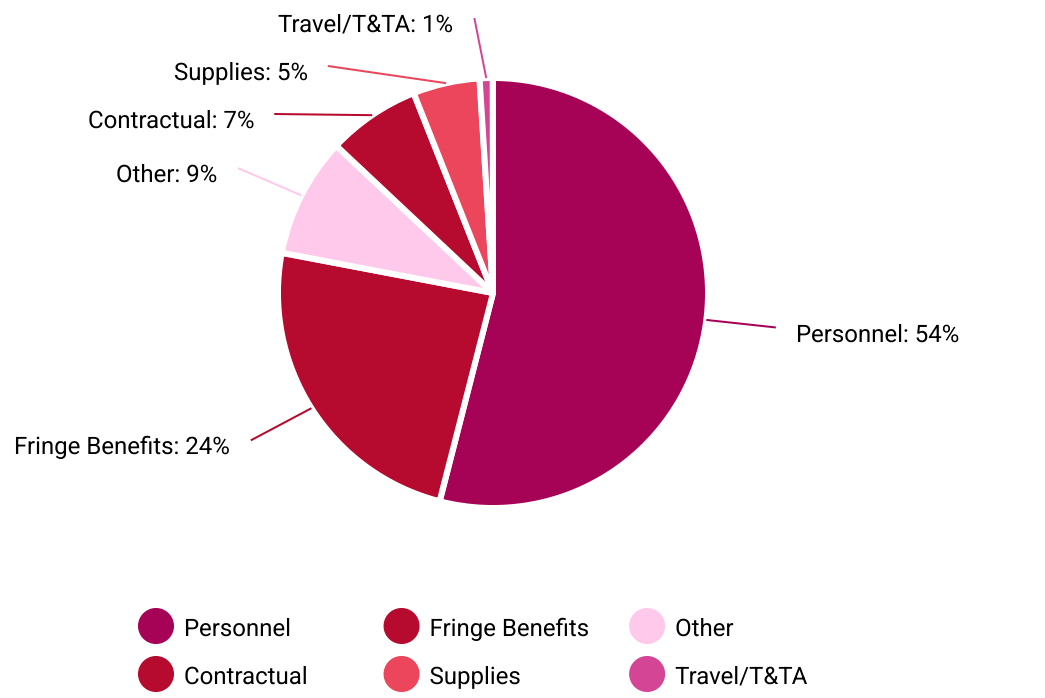
Head Start recognizes the importance of giving back to the community. In doing so, the parent committees in all five counties have committed to partake in community projects. Projects have included making cards for the residents of nursing homes, the collection of pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, and community clean-up projects. We love to go out in the community and give back while connecting with others to help build a stronger community to raise our children up into an even better society.

Annual Budget with Expenditures

Head Start/Early Head Start Funds
\$7,799,531
Approved Budget 2024-2025



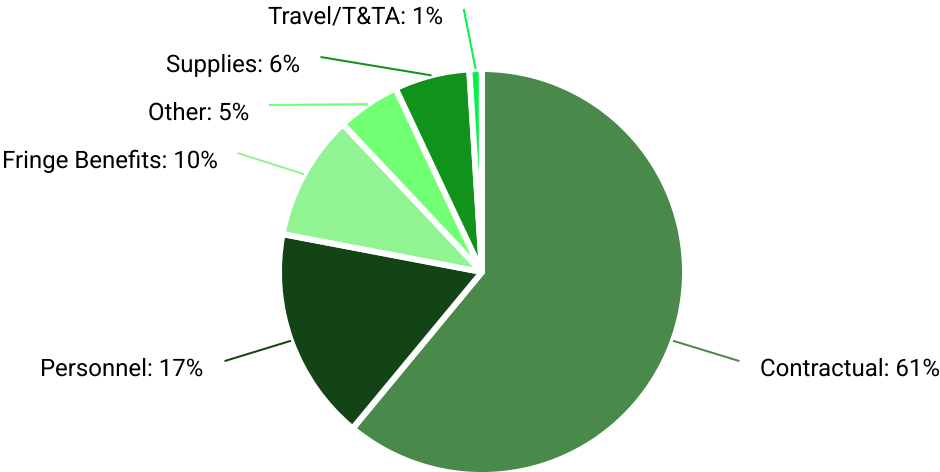
Head Start/Early Head Start Funds
\$7,799,531*
Projected Budget 2025-2026



*Does not include COLA

Annual Budget with Expenditures

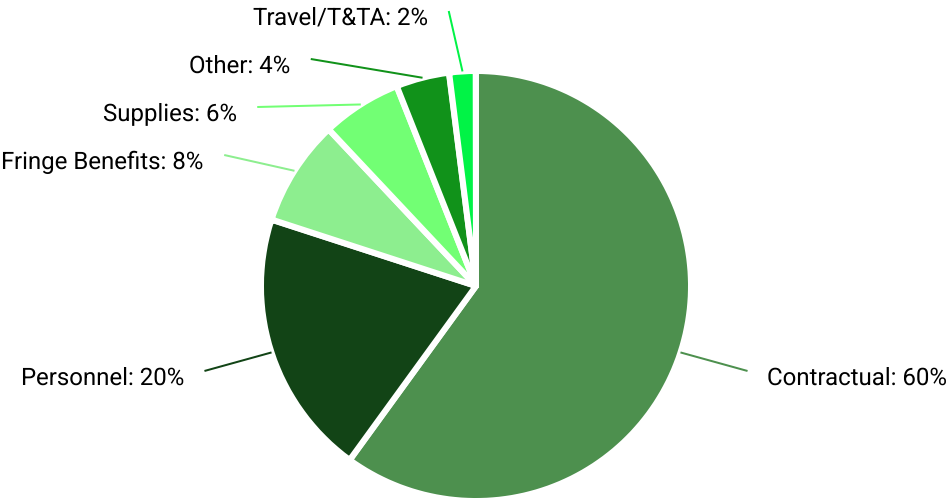
Child Care Partnership Funds
\$1,564,628
Approved Budget 2024-2025



Non-Federal Share
\$391,157

- Contractual
- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Other
- Supplies
- Travel/T&TA

Child Care Partnership Funds
\$1,564,628*
Projected Budget 2025-2026

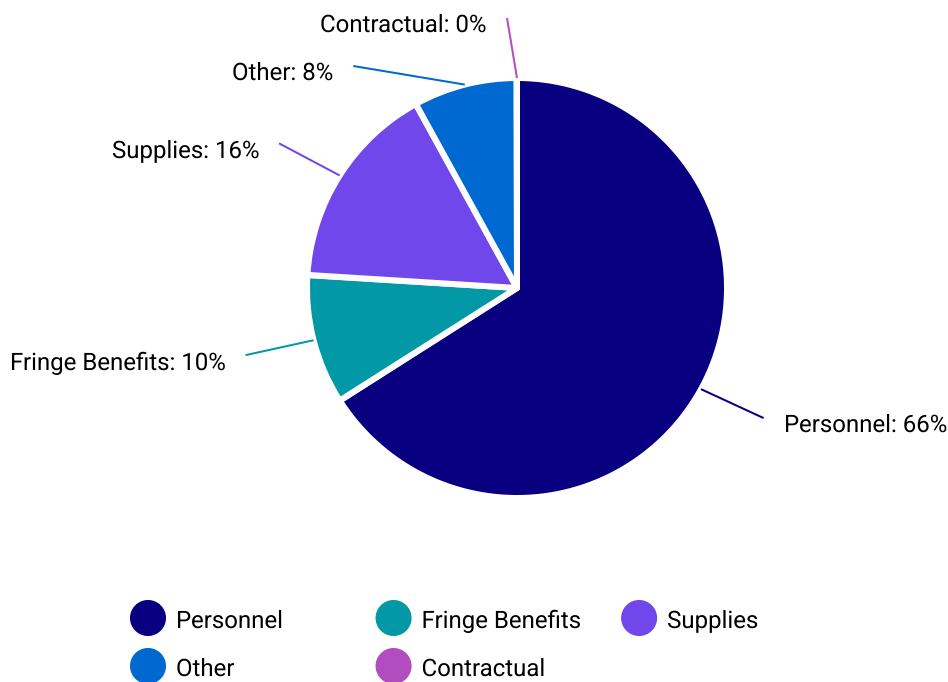


- Contractual
- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Supplies
- Other
- Travel/T&TA

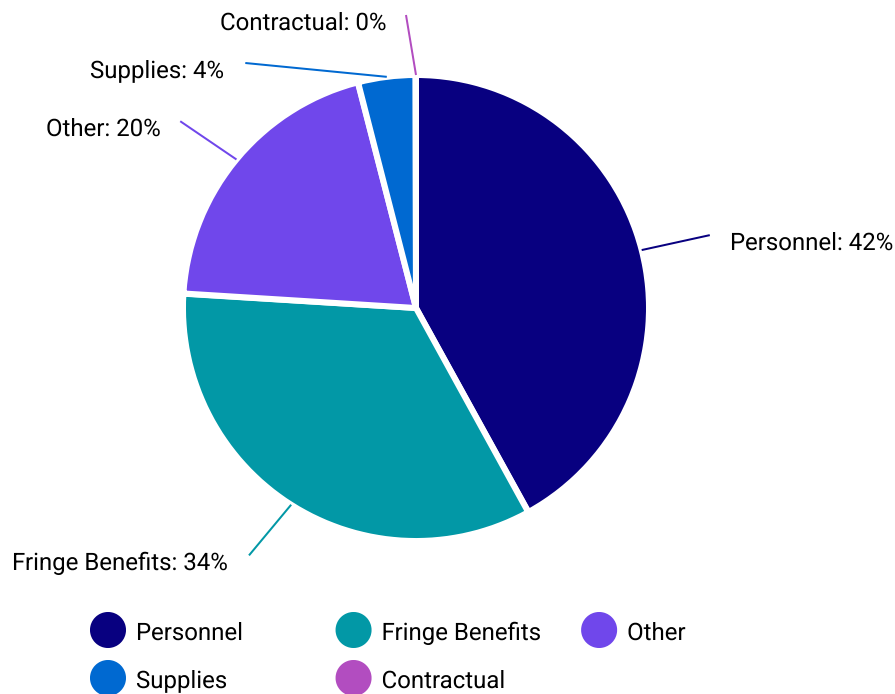
*Does not include COLA

Annual Budget with Expenditures

MIHOW Funds
\$68,000
Approved Budget 2024-2025



MIECHV Funds
\$238,500
Approved Budget 2024-2025



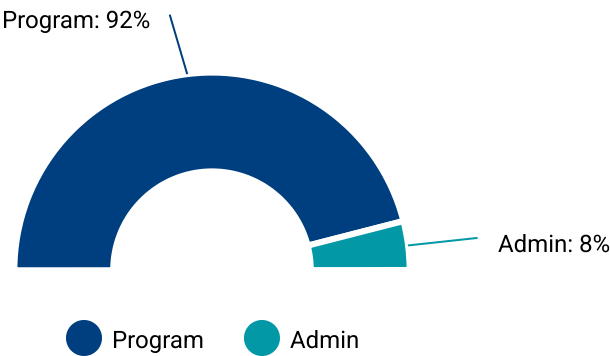
Fiscal Audit

The annual independent audit was performed by SR Snodgrass. – Certified Public Accountants and Consultants of Wheeling, WV. This audit was conducted in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. In accordance with the Government Auditing Standards, the report dated March 25, 2025, stated that there were no findings related to the financial statements and no findings or questioned or likely questioned costs for federal awards for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

The audit included the following statement of activities for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024:

Revenue	Amount
Federal Assistance	\$8,006,761
USDA Meal Reimbursement	\$179,359
MIHOW Grant	\$66,361
MIECHV Grant	\$160,316
Other Grants	\$1,960
Fee for Service Income	\$200,848
Food Basket Donations	\$9,257
Other Income and Refunds	\$3,119
Investment Income	(\$1,214)
In-Kind Revenue	\$1,220,116
Total Revenue	\$9,846,883

Expenses	Amount
Program	\$9,308,209
Administration	\$759,193
Total Expenses	\$10,067,402



~ Anna Sibert, Fiscal Manager

Federal Review Outcomes

The annual review is performed by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) as part of a regulatory monitoring process of Head Start Programs. The most recent monitoring review was a video pilot project for CLASS. CLASS stands for classroom assessment scoring system which is a tool that measures the quality of interactions between teachers and children. The Office of Head Start piloted the use of Grant Recipient video recordings to conduct a CLASS review. The purpose of this pilot was to determine the viability of capturing video observations as part of monitoring for CLASS reviews. The scores obtained during this pilot will not be used by The Office of Head Start for Designated Renewal System (DRS) determinations; however, the scores will be used to help The Office of Head Start understand the current experiences of children in Head Start classrooms as a quality improvement opportunity and to offer training and technical assistance supports that build on existing program efforts to enhance professional development and teacher-child interactions. Our CLASS video pilot review was conducted between November 16, 2022, and January 14, 2023. NPHS, Inc. scores were as follows Emotional Support 6.0089, Classroom Organization 5.8512, and Instructional Support 2.8452. These scores are above the competitive threshold that keeps us out of the DRS determination. We scored just slightly below the required score of 6 for the quality threshold for Emotional Support, and Classroom Organization.

Staff Spotlight

Hello, my name is Cher McKeever. This is my story

My name is Cher McKeever, I live in Shadyside, Ohio. I began my Head Start journey 30 years ago on August 7, 1995. I was working at the Salvation Army in Wheeling, WV and had recently earned my college degree and was moving forward to find another career path. I certainly didn't move too far away from the 'helping people' business when I ended up right here at NPHS. I applied for the Administrative Assistant position. I remember very vividly my interview with Pat Gracey, our Executive Director, Harold Sargus, our Human Resources Manager and Karen Whipkey, our Fiscal Manager. And I will not forget that I cried – I cried because my grandmother was dying, and I was very close to her. They were very understanding. In my second interview I was interviewed by an entire team of coordinators – talk about intimidating! I survived and was offered the job. Within a month of starting my position I did lose my grandmother and within 2 months after that I was married. A lot of life changes for sure starting a new job. I learned so very much about this great Head Start world of ours from Pat Gracey. She was driven like no other 'very strong woman leader' to move mountains for our agency so that we in turn could meet the needs of our children and families. She towed me along to the West Virginia Head Start Association meetings as she was the President of the group for a time. I was elected as the treasurer and served in that role for many years. I was involved in completing all of the paperwork to bring about the 501c3 status of the organization and assisted Becky Gooch Erbacher in running the operations of the Association and its many events and functions. I can honestly say that I grew professionally under the direction of Pat Gracey. Oh, let's not forget that I had a baby 2 years after starting this position. There was another life change! I was surrounded by early childhood professionals who gave me some very loving support and advice over the years as I raised my child into adulthood while being employed with NPHS. I enjoyed working with our management team over the years to make our agency a great place to work and move us forward serving children and families.

I have seen many changes in our program throughout my 30 years and made the change from the Administrative Assistant position to that of ERSEA Coordinator. I was actually asked to take the position over when it came open and I've been on this amazing Head Start roller coaster ride ever since! I love talking with parents about what our program can offer their family while inviting them to join our school family! I enjoy chatting with community leaders at events and partnering with agency staff in our community who also support children and families. I absolutely enjoy working with the NPHS staff to better support the children and the entire family. It's a win win! I value our program so much and want to ensure its future for many years to come. Our children deserve it and so does our community! I'm happy to work with such a caring team of coworkers who also work hard to support the mission of our agency. When you've been with an organization this long, particularly one that handles such precious cargo, our children and real everyday life circumstances, you tend to become like family, and you grow together – I believe very much that's what we do here at NPHS.



Parent Testimonials

They've helped me understand new ways to help our son develop and grow. I've learned so much about early childhood development and what works for our family and Omario. Not to mention we get some much needed adult time to do the things we need to get done.

April Lewis - Magnolia

It has changed me and my child's life so much!

Dean Trupiano - Little Bear

It definitely gave Jonah a leg up for his preparation for Kindergarten. He comes home very excited about his day.

Nichole Williams - Ritchie

It means a new start, stepping stone, and safe environment. Feels as if I can talk to somebody with no judgement. I appreciate everything they can offer/help with. Thank You!

Abbigale McWhorter-MIHOW

To me it means growth. A learning mind not just learning to read or write. A learning mind that can learn to bond. In life we need to nurture more than our brain, but also our heart.

Shannon Jones

Early Head Start means everything to our family. It means we can be a two-income household, and we can breathe easy knowing our child is receiving high quality care. It means our child has a head start in social-emotional learning and cognitive development. Early Head Start has changed our lives in many ways but most importantly has given our child a loving environment to learn and grow. When your child is excited and happy to go to school that is a great feeling!

Katy Romitti - Little Bear CCP

It has changed my life because my son has become social, has made friends, and have met teachers that have made an impact on his life. My son loves going to school here it's all he talks about.

Mariah Aldridge
North Park

They mean a lot! I love them and so grateful for them!

If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't know where I'd be without them. We were in a hotel before I met them and ever since they have done nothing but help me! Now I'm in a nice apartment, furniture, everything!

They are awesome.

Kaytelynn Tolliver - MIHOW/EHS Home Base

Head Start provides a safe place for Kynslee to grow and learn while mom and dad are working to provide a home and good life. Head Start has given us stability and consistency for Kynslee and helped create a routine and predictable day for Kynslee.

Parent Testimonials

You have made Reid more patient and calmer. He's a smart little boy. He loves to learn and likes to make new friends. He has gotten more comfortable with his way around the school. Because I was nervous about this school year, and he has showed me that he's got this! He's confident at school and I really love that. So, Thank you! Reid wouldn't be the little boy he is today if it wasn't for all this teachers.

I was in Early Head Start and Head Start when I was little and while I mainly remember the teachers I had, my mom told me it was crucial in my development and love of reading.

Annie Lilley - Cameron 2

This program changed my life for the better. Taught me how to be a better mother and person. Clarissa is the best human I have ever worked with. With all her help, she has helped me with my mental health and my physical health. Not to mention my daughter, Natalia loves her. So yes, this program is the best decision of my life and changed it for the better.

Autumn McCormick - MIHOW

Head Start means so much to me and my family. We became a Head Start family in 2015, and since then, all six of my children have gone through the program. Each worker we have had over the years has made a meaningful and lasting impact on our lives. Without Head Start, I honestly don't know where we would be. The program has helped us in so many ways, from providing diapers and wipes to supporting childcare needs and community resources. It has given me the ability to provide things for my children that I would not have been able to do on my own. Head Start has also changed my life by giving my children opportunities to grow, learn, and thrive, while allowing me to support others families as well. I have built lasting relationships with many wonderful workers who have helped guide us, and the program has given me the strength, support, and resources to care for my family. Head Start will always have a very special place in our hearts.

Jamie Bernardi

I and Ranger liked the teachers at Head Start. They were really nice to Ranger and to me. Ranger loves to learn all that he can and with the different activities in Head Start they kept his interest. We have tried to keep up with his learning during the summers and evenings. He is in Pre-k this year and hopes to be in kindergarten next year. Thank you all!

Cory Durig - New Martinsville Pre-k

It means giving my 3-year-old an opportunity to learn and play with other neurotypical children. The opportunity to learn from other children and bring him out of his shyness. To try new things and new food. It has already made a positive impact on my son. Brining him out of his shell and learning new things each day. It has also given me the opportunity to take care of the things I need to as a parent during the day.

Heather Blake - CLC 1

Head Start is the key to our children's emotional social development. The bond my son has with Mrs. Crystal will be lifelong. He's more social with children his own age. Communicaiton & clear speech progression. Behavioral techniques for both parents & children are essential.

Kori Tomic - Shortline

Highlights Throughout the Year



Highlights Throughout the Year



"USDA Civil Rights Non-Discrimination Statement"

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online

at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by: mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a high-quality, family-focused program uniquely designed to prepare children for learning and life.

Vision Statement

"Building foundations for life-long growth and development"

Funded Enrollment

Early Head Start – 85 children birth to 3 years old and pregnant women.

Head Start – 300 children ages 3-5 years old.

MIHOW/MIECHV – 50 children birth to 3 years old and pregnant women.

Child Care Partnership – 72 children birth to 3 years old enrolled in a Child Care Setting.

Head Start Funding Source

United States Department of Health and Human Resources, Administrative for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Office of Head Start

(Report compiled in part based on the requirements of the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007)

MIHOW Funding Source

The West Virginia Legislature – WV Department of Health and Human Resources

MIECHV Funding Source

United States Department of Health and Human Resources, Health Resources & Services Administration, The Bureau for Public Health: Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health

Contacts

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