Overview of the Program:

Our mission statement: To provide quality comprehensive services and referrals to children and families, with respect and dignity.

The Head Start Child & Family Development Program, Inc. is a Nebraska not-for-profit corporation, organized as a tax exempt entity under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3). The Corporation is not a state or federal government agency. Funding for the Corporation’s activities comes from a variety of sources, including local, state and federal grants, as well as donations. Donations made to the Corporation are deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes.

A volunteer Board of Directors (governing body) governs the Corporation. The Board of Directors shares decision-making responsibility with a Policy Council. The Policy Council is comprised of parents of children currently enrolled in Head Start and Early Head Start Programs, as well as community representatives. In accordance with Head Start Performance Standards, parents of currently enrolled children are proportionately represented on Policy Council. The Board of Directors has a legal and fiscal responsibility to administer and oversee the agency’s Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Policy Council is responsible for the direction of the agency’s Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Implementation of the decisions of the Board of Directors and the Policy Council is the responsibility of the Corporation’s Executive Director.

When our Corporation was formed, its operations were limited to Head Start in Adams County. Over the years, the Corporation’s activities have grown, as has its service area. The Corporation now offers services in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, Webster, Franklin, and Hall, and includes a wide variety of programs dedicated to meeting the health, developmental, social and educational needs of children and families. To see a complete listing of the programs offered by Head Start CFDP, Inc., please visit our website at www.hshn.org.

Head Start Child and Family Development Program, Inc. continues to respond to the individual needs of families and community partners by offering a variety of programming hours at multiple sites located in its six county area. These sites provide services for 334 preschool children and their families as well as 162 pregnant women, very young children, and their families. Preschool programming includes half day, full day, and combination configurations during a 4 day per week schedule. Programming for Early Head Start children and families is home based and includes weekly visits as well as group socialization opportunities.

Updated 4/27/20
Overview of the process:

Head Start Child and Family Development Program Inc. (Head Start CFDP, Inc.) completes an annual assessment of the communities in which we work. This is year three of the five year grant cycle. While our formal processes indicate an annual review of the community, our agency is engaged in a continuous process of communication and feedback with the communities that we serve. Because of this process, decisions are made throughout the year for the next program year. Parents, employees, community representatives, Policy Council and the Board of Directors provide input and information into the community assessment.

A CA Matrix is completed using data from various sources such as agency data (Child Plus, PIR), State of Nebraska Department of Education, State of Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, US Census Bureau, US Department of Labor, Voices for Children, Kids Count, March of Dimes, University of Nebraska – Extension, Child Welfare League of America, National Head Start Association, Centers for Disease Control, City-Data, and Nebraska Transit.

Timeline & Methodology:

Due to the Performance Standards that were issued fall of 2016, our program began collecting data for the CA in a somewhat different manner than was previously used. Parents are asked at each Parent Meeting/Socialization to share what is happening in their communities. Relevant community happenings are shared at each Monthly Management Meeting. Policy Council and Board also discuss relevant community developments at each meeting. Regular meetings with Program Partners also allow for the collection of data regarding what is happening in each community. The acquired information is consolidated and entered into a matrix for review.

Updated 4/27/20
Urgent community changes are addressed as soon as possible throughout the program year.

DATA GATHERING (MONTHLY or as scheduled): Parent Meetings, Socializations, M&M, Policy Council, Board, Partner Meetings, Staff Meetings

OCTOBER: Enter previous 6 months information into Matrix

FEBRUARY: Family Engagement Survey and Staff Survey conducted

MARCH: Policy Council Survey conducted

MARCH: Enter previous 6 months information into Matrix

MARCH: CA Team to review and make recommendations

APRIL: Policy Council and Board to review and approve CA

MAY: Executive Director utilizes CA for grant proposal & submits to the Regional Office with continuation grant application.

Community Assessment Team:

The Community Assessment Team is comprised of veteran staff from various roles and sites within the program service area. In addition all management and Specialists participate on the team. Specialists are responsible for generating the report submitted to Policy Council and the Board for approval.

Summary:

The biggest thing to impact Nebraska and the Nation has been COVID-19. Starting March 11th, things in the state drastically changed. There were known cases of the Coronavirus and State Boys Basketball Tournament was limited to just household family members. On March 12th NCAA cut all winter and spring events. On March 15th 2 of our largest school districts canceled class for the rest of the month. The week of March 16th, the Commissioner of Education stated that all schools had to go to on-line education format and were not allowed to have classes on site. The Governor and Health Departments were limiting events and group sizes to those with 10 or fewer people. The Director of Head Start and the Regional Office issued guidance to follow local school districts and local government advice when it came to shutting down offices and classrooms. On March 19th, Head Start C&FDP Inc. closed the office for two weeks and then re-evaluated. During this time COVID-19 came closer to our area, it came to Hall and Adams Counties. In an effort to prevent spread and to support staff, staff were asked to work from home. Home Visitors were to continue to complete Early Head Start virtual visits weekly with their families and continue to reach out weekly to Head Start families to see if they needed anything from the agency. Teachers were asked to also complete weekly virtual visits with each of their children and provide a learning activity each week. The program utilized Learning Genie to provide updated information, educational activities, books and videos. The program continues to encourage staff to work from home and they continue to serve families.

Due to on-going concerns with mental health our agency hired a Behavior Coordinator to be a support to classroom and home visiting staff. She coaches staff on addressing behaviors and helps connect the parents to services for the child if the family is interested.

Updated 4/27/20
The agency has dedicated resources to assist our employees with wellness and mental health needs. We also became part of a pilot project with UCLA and the American Heart Association to create a work environment that demonstrates a commitment to employee health.

With the ongoing closure of stores due to COVID-19, there are grave concerns with many retail locations not going to be able to reopen due to lack of income during this time. Many of our retail stores were struggling with making ends meet due to on-line shopping and now they aren’t sure if they will be able to reopen. This will impact some of our families as they have employment at these facilities.

Given there has not been an updated Census, the following information remains the same. Within the service area, the two larger communities have shown growth in their population while the rural communities have shown a decrease. Some of the change in the population may be attributed to the lack of employment and falling commodity prices in the rural areas. Demographically the areas we serve are proportionately white/Caucasian with the biggest disparity being in Hall County where 27.1% of the population is Hispanic/Latino. Language barriers occur most frequently in Adams, Hall and Clay with the largest portion of families needing Spanish translation and interpretation with the next highest population needing the same services being Somalian and Sudanese.

Although the unemployment rates appear high for the families we serve this may be attributed to many of the parents being in school, lack of education, choosing to stay home with their children, lack of child care or the ability to afford child care, lack of transportation, language barriers, work seasonal positions and other extenuating circumstances. In some of the communities we serve, new businesses are added, while in other communities businesses are closing. Approximately 7% of the families served receive Social Security Income.

The education level of the parents served by the agency within our service area without a high school diploma is 25.5% versus the general populate for the agency’s service area is approximately 10%. Specifically within the agency there are 105 Head Start parents with less than a high school degree and 42 Early Head Start parent.

The percent of children with disabilities served in the program within the service area is over 2 times the percentage requirement for Head Start/Early Head Start per the Performance Standards with Head Start being 21% and Early Head Start being 25%.

The percent of children without health insurance in the state is 5.1%. The families served by the program participating in Medicaid is 83%, 13% have private insurance and without any insurance is 6%. It is apparent the agency has an on-going focus on assisting families with obtaining medical insurance or Medicaid.

In Nebraska 46% of drug overdose deaths were attributed to Opioid pain relievers. It has been recognized that Opioids abuse is a growing concern and the agency will continue to monitor and address concerns as needed for the families served. According to the Nebraska State Patrol, Meth continues to be our area’s largest drug being abused other than alcohol. Opioids in this area is not as prevalent among the low income population.

Most of the communities within the agency’s service area do not provide fluoride in their drinking water which contributes to a high need for dental services. The agency has partnered with the local community college to provide fluoride varnish and sealants to preschool children.
There is a lack of mental health services and providers that accept Medicaid or affordable sliding scale fee for services for adults in the areas served. There are even fewer that provide for children within the areas.

The attorney on the Head Start CFDP, Inc. board has worked assisted in creating a list of legal resources that are free to the families served by the program. The program has provided training to home visitors on Legal Aid and on an on-line free legal advice for those in Nebraska at www.NE.freelegalanswers.org. The program refers to all of the resources as needed.

There is a correlation between the number of children receiving free lunch and breakfast in the school district and the number of children served in those communities. Over half of our Early Head Start families receive SNAP benefits and participate in the WIC program.

At this point 17% Head Start and 23% Early Head Start meet the McKinney Vento definition of homeless. Trends will be monitored over the next 5 years. HUD housing is not available in Franklin or Nuckolls counties and there is only homeless shelters in Adams and Hall counties.

High quality and affordable childcare options are limited in the 6 county areas. The agency is working with the Infant Toddler Initiative, Rooted in Relationships, Buffet Early Childhood Fund, Nebraska Children’s Foundation and the Department of Health and Human Services/Childcare Licensing to explore options to increase the quality and affordability of care in the 6 county area.

Adams and Hall counties have seen an increase in population since the 2010 census while the other counties have demonstrated a decrease.

The agency has seen a decrease in the number of Head Start children served coming from a single parent home, will EHS has seen stable numbers in two-parent homes. The agency continues to work on getting fathers engaged with the program and their children. The agency currently has a Father’s Committee and it purchasing a program through Strong Fathers to try to increase the numbers of father’s involved.

In each county there is very limited public transportation only. These options are by appointment only and do not run on a daily basis or 24 hours a day.

A majority of social services are provided in Adams and Hall counties, participants in the outer counties are expected to travel to the larger communities to receive services.

Health and dental services are becoming more restricted or eliminated especially for children and families in poverty in most of the communities. The places that do accept Medicaid have long waiting lists and can take an extended period of time to get a child in for services.

The agency continues to have partnerships with 6 different school districts. The Silver Lake School completed a massive renovation to their building. It shortened their school year last year but they were up and running the first part of September this year for classes.

There have been many positives in the various communities. All primary communities in the county have gained Dollar Generals, allowing families access to goods, groceries and employment. In Red Cloud the community has built a new Child Development Center offering childcare to all children in the surrounding area. They include children with Title XX assistance and have employed several community
In Grand Island the new hospital is still under construction. Healthy Beginnings provides services in Hall and Adams Counties. The Bridge, a halfway house for women in long term (6-18 mo.) substance abuse treatment, has opened a Mom and Me program within the last year. The Bridge accommodates dependent children, age eight (8) and under, who are in their mother's care while living in a therapeutic community. Programming for mothers with their children carries a heavy emphasis on parenting and treatment issues. Heartland Health has expanded services by adding another dentist and a mental health professional. The agency is working with Safe Kids to encourage more services and events in the Grand Island community. In Superior the building was renovated through USDA and Duration grant funds. It now houses a full day classroom. The city of Franklin was able to open a new daycare for a small number of children in the old pharmacy building.

The agency employees 70 current or former parents of Early Head Start or Head Start programs. Of the 152 employees for Early Head Start and Head Start, 46 are bi-lingual. We continue to work hard to find qualified and bilingual employees.