

**TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION TO REQUEST FUNDS FROM HHS FOR A COST OF LIVING  
ADJUSTMENT & QUALITY FUNDS FOR FY 2023 FOR CHOCTAW NATION HEAD START  
PROGRAM**

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**IN THE TRIBAL COUNCIL OF THE CHOCTAW NATION**

**RONALD PERRY INTRODUCED THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL BILL**

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**A COUNCIL BILL**

**TO APPROVE** application to the United States Department of Health and Human Services for Cost of Living Adjustment and Quality Funding for FY 2023 for the Choctaw Nation Head Start Program.

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Article IX, Section 6 of the Constitution of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, the Tribal Council (the "Council") shall make decisions pertaining to the acquisition, leasing, disposition, and management of tribal property;

**WHEREAS**, funds are made available to American Indian and Alaskan Native Head Start Program by the United States Department of Health & Human Services Administration of Children and Families Office of Head Start ("HHS");

**WHEREAS**, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (the "Nation") seeks to apply to HHS for funds in the amount of \$236,640 for FY2023;

**WHEREAS**, the Nation's Head Start Program will use \$148,904 of those funds for a cost of living adjustment ("COLA") to adjust Head Start salaries;

**WHEREAS**, the Nation's Head Start Program will use \$87,736 for Quality Funding to improve the quality of services provided to Head Start children and families and such funding will only be used for approved purposes such as ensuring physical environments are conducive to providing effective program services to children and families, strengthening family services, and providing professional development to enable staff to be fully competent to meet professional standards;

**WHEREAS**, the 25% non-federal share match has been waived by HHS;

**WHEREAS**, HHS requires Tribal Council approval to apply for COLA and Quality Funding, See Exhibit A; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council has determined that it is in the best interest of the Nation to approve application to HHS to receive COLA and quality funds for the Head Start Program for FY 2023.

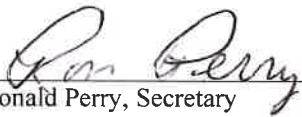
**THEREFORE BE IT ENACTED** by the Tribal Council of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma that this Bill be cited as approval to apply to United States Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Office of Head Start, for funds in the amount of Two hundred thirty-six thousand Six hundred Forty Dollars (\$236,640) for cost of living adjustments and quality funds for the Head Start Program for Fiscal Year 2023.


**BE IT FURTHER ENACTED** by the Tribal Council of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma that this Bill be cited as an acknowledgement that the Chief of the Nation, or his designee, is authorized to prepare, execute, deliver and file any and all agreements, certificates, instruments and documents, in such form and with such terms and provisions as the Chief of the Nation, or his designee, may approve, and to take such other action as may be deemed proper or appropriate to carry out the intent and purposes of the foregoing enactments.

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**CERTIFICATION**

*I, the undersigned, as speaker of the Tribal Council of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, do hereby certify that the Tribal Council is composed of twelve (12) seats. Eight (8) members must be present to constitute a quorum. I further certify that twelve (12) members answered roll call and that a quorum was present at the Regular Session of the Tribal Council at Tuskahoma, Oklahoma on April 8, 2023. I further certify that the foregoing Council Bill CB-61-23 was adopted at such meeting by the affirmative vote of twelve (12) members, zero (0) negative votes, and zero (0) abstaining.*

  
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Ronald Perry, Secretary  
Choctaw Nation Tribal Council

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Williston, Speaker  
Choctaw Nation Tribal Council

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary Batton, Chief  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Date 4-11-23

**TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION TO REQUEST FUNDS FROM HHS FOR A COST OF LIVING  
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**Purpose/Need of Council Bill:** The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Head Start Program proposes to utilize the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) of \$148,904 to give staff a 5.60% cost of living adjustment. In addition, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma proposes to utilize the Quality Improvement funding of \$87,736 to improve the quality of services by ensuring physical environments are conducive to providing effective program services to children and families, strengthening family services, and providing professional development to enable staff to be fully competent to meet professional standards. This council bill will allow the Nation to achieve its strategic goal to support service delivery to improve tribal member quality of life. The Head Start Program provides education and services to tribal member children and families that help to improve quality of life and tribal member self-sufficiency and independence.

**Title of Council Bill:** TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION TO REQUEST FUNDS FROM HHS FOR A COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT & QUALITY FUNDS FOR FY 2023 FOR CHOCTAW NATION HEAD START PROGRAM

**Federal Agency:** United States Department of Health and Human Services

**Budget:** \$236,640

**Match Required:** \$0

**Request by/Project Director:** Rachel Pittman, Senior Director Child Care & Head Start; Teresa Jackson, SEO Tribal Services



ADMINISTRATION FOR  
**CHILDREN & FAMILIES**

Office of Head Start | 330 C St., SW, 4th Floor, Washington DC 20201 | eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

March 10, 2023

**Grant No. 90CI010103**

**Dear Head Start Grant Recipient:**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, contains an increase for Head Start of \$960 million over the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 level. This includes a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of \$596 million and a \$262 million Quality Improvement investment. The COLA supports a 5.60 percent adjustment above FY 2022 funding levels to increase the pay scales of Head Start and Early Head Start staff, including vacant positions, fringe benefits, and to offset higher operating costs. Quality Improvement funds are allocated proportionately based on federal funded enrollment levels, with additional adjustments given to smaller grant recipients to allow for a meaningful investment, as permitted by the Act.

The following table reflects the COLA and Quality Improvement increases available for FY 2023.

<b>Funding Type</b>	<b>AIAN Head Start</b>
Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA)	\$148,904
Quality Improvement (QI)	\$87,736
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>\$236,640</b>

Please note, these permanent increases are effective at the start of the FY 2023 budget period and are retroactive if this period has already commenced. Allocations are subject to adjustment if changes are made to annual funding/enrollment levels. Applicable to recipients operating both a Head Start and Early Head Start program, allocations for each funding type by program **must** be budgeted accordingly in application submissions.

**Application Submission Requirements**

The supplemental application is due **April 21, 2023** (except for recipients that have yet to submit their FY 2023 Non-Competing New (NCN) or Non-Competing Continuation (NCC) application. In these instances, the due date for COLA and Quality Improvement funds will be the due date for the NCN or NCC application) and must be submitted in the [Head Start Enterprise System \(HSES\)](#). To apply, please select the **Financials** tab, **Grant Application** tab, **Fiscal Year 2023**, and add the **'Supplement – COLA and Quality Improvement'** amendment type. No other supplemental application type will be accepted for this funding opportunity.

Recipients that have not yet submitted their FY 2023 NCN or NCC application may include their COLA and Quality Improvement allocations in the annual application. If included, the NCN or NCC must contain separate project narratives and budget justifications for COLA and Quality Improvement as outlined in guidance described later in this notice. All supporting documentation for COLA and Quality Improvement must be clearly identified and uploaded in the 'Application and Budget Justification Narrative' folder under the 'Documents' tab within the NCN or NCC.

For additional information on the allowable uses of COLA and Quality Improvement funding, refer to Program Instruction ACF-PI-HS-23-02.

## Contents of 'Supplement – COLA and Quality Improvement' Application

Applications must include separate project narratives and detailed budget justifications for each funding type, COLA and Quality Improvement, and by program, Head Start and/or Early Head Start. Each narrative must use 12-point font, and not exceed 10 pages. All narratives, budget justifications, and other supporting documentation must be uploaded into respective folders within the **Documents** tab of the application.

For COLA, the following must be demonstrated:

- A permanent increase of no less than the required 5.6 percent adjustment to the pay scale for each Head Start/Early Head Start position, including current employees and unfilled vacancies subject to the provisions of Sections 653 and 640(j) of the Head Start Act;
- A rationale and supporting documentation detailing agency policies and procedures if a position is receiving less than the required COLA percentage or differential COLA increases;
- The provision of a no less than 5.6 percent increase to all delegate agencies and partners or justification if less than the required percentage or differential increases are provided to delegate agencies and partners;
- Written confirmation that increases will be applied retroactively to the start of the FY 2023 budget period with a description of how funds will be distributed to affected employees, if applicable;
- The planned uses for any portion of the COLA funds to offset higher operating costs, once the 5.6 percent increase is provided to all staff, delegates and partners.

For Quality Improvement, the following must be demonstrated:

- Investments are consistent with Sec. 640(a)(5) of the Act (except programs are not bound by the requirements that at least 50 percent of the funds be used for staff compensation or that no more than 10 percent of funds be used on transportation. For more information on allowable activities as outlined in the Act, please see Attachment A);
- Investments made in Quality Improvement should be ongoing; description and written confirmation that funds will be used for ongoing purposes consistent with Section 640(a)(5) of the Act;
- If funds are used for staff wages, written confirmation that increases will be applied retroactively to the start of the FY 2023 budget period with a description of how funds will be distributed to all affected employees.
- If funds are used for one-time activities in the FY 2023 budget period, describe plans for how the funds will be allocated in the subsequent budget period.

Recipients are strongly encouraged to commit to sustained quality improvement investments, such as further increasing wages of Head Start/Early Head Start educational staff. However, grant recipients have the flexibility to use these funds to support the greatest local needs, consistent with Section 640(a)(5) of the Act.

### **Declination of Funds**

If any portion of the funding identified above will not be requested, a statement regarding this decision must be submitted through HSES Correspondence no later than the date the application is due. The subject line of the HSES Correspondence should read – “[recipient grant number] [recipient name] –declination of [all or portion] COLA/QI funds”. As a reminder, these funds are permanent increases to the Head Start and Early Head Start base funding levels. A declination of any portion of the funds may impact budgets for subsequent years.

## **Application's Budget Tab Requirements**

Data entered on the **Budget** tab within the application populates the SF-424A. Funding for both, COLA and Quality Improvement, must be included and within the appropriate program, Head Start or Early Head Start.

## **Non-Federal Match**

The budget and detailed budget justification must include each source of non-federal match, including estimated amount per source and the valuation methodology. Flexibilities continue for waiver requests of the non-federal match requirement through the public health emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If a non-federal match waiver is being request, a value of \$0 must be entered in Section C of the SF-424A of the application. No additional justification is required, and the issuance of a notice of award constitutes approval of the request.

## **Supporting Documents**

Signed statements of the Governing Body and Policy Council Chairs along with Governing Body and Policy Council minutes documenting each group's participation in the development and approval of the application must be provided. Through the public health emergency, at a minimum a statement confirming approval by Governing Body and Policy Council members available for contact will be accepted.

Upon expiration of the public health emergency, flexibilities for application requirements including requests for non-federal match waivers and Governing Body and Policy Council approvals will no longer be in effect. Applications submitted after the expiration must meet the full requirements.

The application must be submitted on behalf of the Authorizing Official registered in the HSES. **Incomplete applications will not be processed.**

Please ensure the application contains all of the required information. For questions or assistance, please contact Tracie Little, Head Start Program Specialist, at 202-205-8869 or [tracie.little@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:tracie.little@acf.hhs.gov) or Sharon Browne, Grants Management Specialist, at 202-205-1532 or [Sharon.browne@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Sharon.browne@acf.hhs.gov).

## **Program Improvement (One-Time) Requests**

Grant recipients encountering program improvement needs that cannot be supported by the agency budgets or other resources are invited to apply for one-time funding. This funding must be applied for separately through the appropriate supplemental amendment type in HSES. Program Improvement requests generally include but not limited to facility projects (construction, purchase, or major renovations requiring 1303 applications or minor repairs and enhancements), are prioritized and, issued funding subject to the availability of funds. If a program improvement request is submitted, please allow for additional time for a final decision. For questions regarding program improvement needs and requests, please contact the regional office.

For technical assistance in preparing the application, please contact the HSES Help Desk at [help@hsesinfo.org](mailto:help@hsesinfo.org) or 1-866-771-4737.

Sincerely,  
The Office of Head Start

## Attachment A

### Allowable Uses of Quality Improvement Funds as Specified in the Head Start Act

1. To improve the compensation (including benefits) of educational personnel, family service workers, and child counselors, as described in Sections 644(a) and 653 of the Head Start Act, in the manner determined by the Head Start agencies (including Early Head Start agencies) involved, to support the following —
  - ensure that compensation is adequate to attract and retain qualified staff for the programs involved in order to enhance program quality;
  - improve staff qualifications and assist with the implementation of career development programs for staff that support ongoing improvement of their skills and expertise; and
  - provide education and professional development to enable teachers to be fully competent to meet the professional standards established under Sec. 648A(a)(1) of the Act, including—
    - providing assistance to complete postsecondary course work;
    - improving the qualifications and skills of educational personnel to become certified and licensed as bilingual education teachers, or as teachers of English as a second language; and
    - improving the qualifications and skills of educational personnel to teach and provide services to children with disabilities
2. To support staff training, child counseling, and other services necessary to address the challenges of children from immigrant, refugee, and asylee families; homeless children; children in foster care; children with limited English proficiency; children of migrant or seasonal farmworker families; children from families in crisis; children referred to Head Start programs (including Early Head Start programs) by child welfare agencies; and children who are exposed to chronic violence or substance abuse.
3. To ensure that the physical environments of Head Start programs are conducive to providing effective program services to children and families, and are accessible to children with disabilities and other individuals with disabilities.
4. To employ additional qualified classroom staff to reduce the child-to-teacher ratio in the classroom and additional qualified family service workers to reduce the family-to-staff ratio for those workers.
5. To ensure that Head Start programs have qualified staff that promote the language skills and literacy growth of children and that provide children with a variety of skills that have been identified, through scientifically based reading research, as predictive of later reading achievement.
6. To increase hours of program operation, including the following —
  - conversion of part-day programs to full-working day programs; and
  - increasing the number of weeks of operation in a calendar year.
7. To improve community wide strategic planning and needs assessments for Head Start programs and collaboration efforts for such programs, including outreach to children described in no. 2 above.
8. To transport children in Head Start programs safely.
9. To improve the compensation and benefits of staff of Head Start agencies, in order to improve the quality of Head Start programs.