

ERSEA stands for....Eligibility Recruitment Selection Enrollment Attendance

Eligibility Process

1. Conduct an in-person interview with each family to determine eligibility.(application)
2. Verify Information (age & eligibility)
3. Create eligibility determination record. (Eligibility Verification Form signed by PCs)



Age requirements:

- EHS: Child must be an infant or toddler younger than three years old. Pregnant woman any age.
- HS: Child must be at least three or turn three by the date used to determine eligibility for public school in the community in which the Head Start program is located; and be no older than the age required to attend school. (August 15)
- Documents used to verify age are: Birth certificate, TennCare insurance card, certified immunization record, passport, etc.

Income/Categorical requirements:

A child or pregnant women is eligible, if:

- Family's income is equal to or below the poverty line; or,
 - i.e. 100% of poverty level for a family of four is \$32,150; family of 3 is \$26,650.
- Family is potentially eligible for public assistance (TANF, SNAP, or SSI); or
- Child is Homeless; or
- Child is in Foster Care.

Family: For a child, means all persons living in the same household who are:

1. Supported by child's parent (s) or guardian(s)' income; and
2. Related to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s) by blood, marriage, or adoption; or
3. The child's authorized caregiver or legally responsible party.

Verifying Eligibility

- The program must use all income for the relevant time period which includes: tax forms, pay stub, employer's statements, zero income or other proof of income.
 - A program may make an adjustment to a family's gross income calculation for the purposes of determining eligibility to account for excessive housing cost. A program may use available bills, bank statements, and other relevant documentation provided by the family to calculate total annual housing cost with appropriate multipliers to determine if a family spends more than 30 percent of their total gross income on housing cost and if applicable reduce the total gross income by the amount spent on housing cost that exceed more than 30%.
- Public Assistance: program staff may accept award letter, EBT card, or a printout.
- Foster Care: program staff must accept court order, or other legal or government-issued document, written statement from a government child welfare official, or foster care payment.
- Homeless: program staff may accept a written statement from a homeless services provider, school personnel, or other service agency attesting that the child is homeless.

Relevant time period: The 12 months preceding the month in which the application is submitted; or the preceding calendar year in which the application is submitted, whichever more accurately reflects the needs of the family at the time of application.

Program must keep eligibility determination records for each participant.

Records include:

- Copies of any documents or statements necessary to verify eligibility.(Proof of income and birth)
- Statement that program staff has made efforts to verify information. (Application)
- Statement that identifies whether the family qualifies according to income, public assistance, homeless or foster care, (certificate of verification of income & birth, selection criteria)

Program must keep eligibility determination records for those currently enrolled, as long as they are enrolled, and for one yr. after they have stopped receiving services.

Required Training:

Program must train management and staff members who make eligibility determinations w/ 90 days of hiring. Program must train all governing body and policy council members w/ 180 days of the beginning of the term.

Policies & Procedures

- Failure to follow Federal and program eligibility determination regulations could result in staff termination. Stated on all of our ERSEA procedures.
- Families understand that falsification of information could result in the dismissal of their child from the program. Stated on HS/EHS application.
- We treat all families with dignity and respect; interviews are conducted in a quiet area; an interpreter is provided when needed; we follow our confidentiality policy.

Recruitment

Recruitment is “Getting the word out” In order for our program to reach those most in need of our services, our program needs to recruit. We inform families of our programs services, and encourage and assist with them applying. Recruitment is continuous throughout the program year. Please share the word about our program!

Selection

Our program has established selection criteria that helps prioritize the selection of participants. All applicants are assigned points according to various factors. Families with the greatest needs have more points.

Enrollment

The program must maintain full enrollment at all times throughout the year. When a child drops from the program, we have 30 days to fill the slot before we are considered under enrolled.

Attendance

The program must maintain an attendance rate of 85% every month. If attendance is below this number, we must analyze the cause. Program staff meets with families when children’s attendance is below 85% to help address any concerns. When a child is absent, program staff contacts the parent/legal guardian to ensure child’s well-being.

