

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services and the Community Action Partnership Agency

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Dickinson region receives grant to establish an Early Head Start Program

BISMARCK, N.D. – Southwestern North Dakota has received good tidings this holiday season. The Community Action Partnership Agency (CAP) that runs the Head Start Program in the eight-county region has been awarded a \$1.17 million federal grant to start an Early Head Start program, which will benefit 72 infants, toddlers, and pregnant women.

Once fully developed, the comprehensive child development program will serve Adams, Billings, Bowman, Dunn, Golden Valley, Hettinger, Slope, and Stark counties. The agency will provide periodic home-based services including home visits and socialization opportunities, as well as center-based services five days per week in Dickinson.

“We are very excited to see Sharon Hansen and her staff receive this important funding, which will benefit children and families in the southwestern part of the state. Their proposal competed against applicants from across the country,” said Linda Rorman, State Head Start Collaboration Office administrator for the N.D. Department of Human Services.

Rorman said it has been almost 10 years since North Dakota received funding to expand Early Head Start Program services. There are currently seven other Early Head Start Programs in North Dakota.

CAP Head Start Director Sharon Hansen described the community support as incredible.

“Local partners pledged \$275,000 in match, and over 40 community partners submitted letters of support or memorandums of agreement,” Hansen said.

Early Head Start programs mainly serve families with lower incomes or children with disabilities. They view parents as the primary nurturers and educators of their children, and strive to empower parents to support their children’s physical, emotional, and social development.

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The new program will provide early childhood enrichment and learning activities, daily care, parenting education, comprehensive health and mental health services, including services for participating women before, during, and after pregnancy; nutrition, and other support for parents.

Hansen said the Community Action Partnership Agency has one year to complete planning and some new services may become available as early as the summer of 2010.

CAP has been the Head Start grantee in the region since 1991 and currently serves about 152 preschool children (ages 3-4) and their families.

For information about Head Start and Early Head Start services, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childfamily/headstart/, for information about the Community Action Head Start and Early Head Start grantee in the Southwest region, see www.dickinsoncap.org/Head-Start.html.

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