

Head Start Parent Handbook



Supporting families Prenatal – age 5

Northwest Community Action, Inc.

312 North Main Street

P.O. Box 67

Badger, MN 56714

(218) 528-3227 or (800) 568-5319

www.nwcaa.org

WELCOME TO HEAD START

Northwest Community Action's (NWCA) Head Start program has been serving families in Northwestern Minnesota since 1965. Currently, our Head Start and Early Head Start programs can serve more than 280 children each year in Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Kittson, and Marshall Counties. Eleven thousand families are served by Head Start programs throughout the state of Minnesota each year, and more than one million children are served nationally.

Northwest Head Start is a family-oriented program, which provides classroom services to children who are three to five years old, and/or information in the areas of education, health, mental health, nutrition, disabilities, parent involvement and family services. Head Start believes that parents are the most important influence in a child's life. Parent involvement in all aspects of the program is essential. Your participation is needed for a successful year with Head Start.

MISSION STATEMENT

Northwest Head Start seeks to assist children to achieve appropriate physical and developmental growth, increasing self-confidence, and improving and expanding each child's ability to think, reason, and communicate with others. Northwest Head Start also seeks to assist parents and families to improve their parenting skills, self-sufficiency, and the conditions in which they live, learn, and work.

HEAD START STAFF

Head Start Director – Beth Budziszewski
Early Childhood Education Manager –Crystal Peterson
Early Childhood Education Manager- Sara Lee
Early Childhood Education Manager- Pam Horntvedt
Early Childhood Disabilities/Mental Health Services Manager – TBD
Health Services Manager – Jo Christian
Health Services Manager Assistant – Monica Byre
Family Services Manager – Jackie Stinson
Early Childhood Instructional Coach – TBD
Office Assistant – Natasha Lee

The Head Start office is open Monday through Friday,
From 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If you have questions about any aspect of the Head Start Program,
Please call our office at (218) 528-3227 or 1-800-568-5319.

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HEAD START/EARLY HEAD START SCHOOL READINESS OBJECTIVES

Physical Development and Health

- 1) Children will acquire and maintain a high level of physical health, including being up-to-date on Physical and dental check-ups and immunizations.
- 2) Children will demonstrate increasing control of large muscles for movement, navigation, and balance consistent with their chronological and developmental levels.
- 3) Children will demonstrate increasing fine motor strength, coordination and agility for use in self-care, manipulation of materials and exploring their environment.

Social-Emotional Development

- 1) Children will be able to manage feelings appropriately and self-regulate with regard to their emotions, attention span and behavior.
- 2) Children will demonstrate positive, appropriate social relationships with family members, peers and other significant adults.
 - a) Children will demonstrate positive social relationships in individual and group settings.
 - b) Children will follow developmentally appropriate limits and expectations.
- 3) Families will take an active role in the social-emotional growth of their children.

Approaches to Learning

- 1) Children will demonstrate a positive approach to learning through persistence, attentiveness, engagement, problem-solving, flexibility, curiosity and inventiveness thinking.
- 2) Children will show an increasing ability to express themselves through sound, movement, visual media and role play.
- 3) Families will become more aware of various approaches to learning.

Language and Literacy

- 1) Children will demonstrate increasing skills in comprehension and use of more complex and varying vocabulary.
- 2) Children will demonstrate increasing proficiency in using language to communicate needs, wants and self-expression.
- 3) Children will demonstrate comprehension and will respond to books (texts, environmental print, and symbols).
- 4) Children will demonstrate an increase in the development of writing skills through the writing stages.
- 5) Families will be encouraged to actively participate in the language and literacy development of their child through information and materials.

Cognition and General Knowledge

- 1) Children will use math skills in everyday classroom and family routines as appropriate for their developmental level. They will show increased Competency in counting, comparing, relating and problem-solving.
- 2) Children will engage in scientific exploration through observation, Imitation, manipulation, and curiosity.
- 3) Children will demonstrate the use of skills in reasoning and problem solving, finding multiple solutions and answering questions.
- 4) Children will increase their understanding of the classroom, community, and home environment.

Head Start/Early Head Start Parent and Family Engagement Outcomes

1. Family Well-Being

Parents and families will be safe, healthy, and have increased financial security.

2. Positive Parent-Child Relationships

Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families will develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development.

3. Families as Lifelong Educators

Parents and families will observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.

4. Families as Learners

Parents and families will advance their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.

5. Family Engagement in Transitions

Parents and families will support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments, including EHS to HS, EHS/HS to other early learning environments, and HS to kindergarten through elementary school.

6. Family Connections to Peers and Community

Parents and families will form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.

7. Families as Advocates and Leaders

Parents and families will participate in leadership development, decision-making, program policy development, or in community and state organizing activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

CENTER INFORMATION

Northwest Head Start provides a variety of options for children and families throughout our service area. The number of center sessions and home visits offered varies among communities due to space availability and the individual needs of children and families. The Head Start program makes every effort to meet the needs of all enrolled children. Ten percent, or more, of our enrollees, are children with specific special needs or diagnosed disabilities. The state of Minnesota licensed ratio for preschool children ages 3-5 is 10-1 with a maximum capacity of 20 children per class with full day sessions. Licensing capacity based on ages of children will be followed per Minnesota licensing guidelines.

The following components are part of a typical center:

- Opening
- Large and small group activities
- Gross motor and small/fine motor activities
- Story/Music/Creative Arts
- Hygiene: Hand washing and tooth brushing (once a day per center)
- Nutritious Meals and/or Snacks: Head Start contracts with area schools to provide meals for our enrollees. They follow the USDA Guidelines. Head Start discourages snacks high in sugar, salt and fat. If you wish to provide treats for a holiday or a special occasion, you are encouraged to bring a snack that is NUTRITIOUS (fruit, crackers and cheese, yogurt, etc.). *No homemade food items are allowed at the center.*
- Free-play/Learning Stations
- Closing

Attendance Policy:

Your child's regular attendance at Head Start is important to his/her academic success today and in the future. If a child is absent, and the teacher has not been notified as to the reason for the absence beforehand or within the first hour of the center, the teacher will attempt to contact the family.

Information will be provided to parents at orientation and throughout the program year via parent meetings and newsletters about the benefits of regular attendance at the center. Teachers will notify their Family Advocate when a child has been absent two consecutive days with no explanation. The Family Advocate will contact the family and conduct a home visit if necessary to determine the reason for the absence and encourage attendance. The Family Services Manager will monitor monthly attendance. Children who are considered chronically absent, which is two or more times in one month, will be contacted by their teacher or Family Advocate to provide education and family support to increase the child's attendance. Managers will be consulted and provide additional support to families as needed. If a family chooses not to send their child to the center, even after attempts have been made to re-engage the family, they will be considered a drop and be replaced by the next eligible child on the waitlist.

Transportation:

Parents complete a Release of Authorization form which lists people, other than the child's parents or legal guardians, that are authorized to pick up their child from the Head Start classroom. A copy of the Release of Authorization form is kept in the classroom and in the child's file at the main office. The Release of Authorization form will be updated at conferences or as changes or additions occur. Handwritten notes signed by the parent or legal guardian identifying additional individuals to whom their child may be released will be allowed. Phone calls and electronic communications (such as emails, texts, faxes, etc.) will not be accepted for the purpose of

making changes to the Release of Authorization form. Legal documentation is needed on site and in the child's main Head Start file if a legal parent or guardian is NOT authorized to pick up their child.

Local school districts provide busing to Head Start children that are on the existing bus routes. Each school district has its own procedure for bussing. Please discuss transportation with your school district. If you are bringing your child to the center, for your child's safety they will need to be signed in when you bring your child into the Head Start classroom and signed out when you pick your child up in the classroom.

Please call your teacher or the Head Start office if your child will be absent from the center. In case of bad weather, listen to your local radio or TV station for announcements. If your local school is closed, the center will be canceled also.

Field Trips:

If the class is going on a field trip off-site and using the school transportation, you will be given a permission slip that must be signed and returned to the teacher. **If your child does not have a signed permission slip for the field trip, they will stay in the classroom with a staff member to supervise.** Parents/guardians or a family member are encouraged to accompany their child on field trips when possible.

EDUCATION INFORMATION

Developmental Screening:

Each child enrolled in the Head Start program will have a developmental screening through the local school districts and/or Head Start Staff. Parents, teachers and other Head Start staff will work together to determine whether a referral for further assessment is needed.

If you have any concerns or questions about your child's development, please discuss them with your teacher or another Head Start staff member. All information given to Head Start is kept strictly confidential. No information from a child's file is released to anyone without written permission from the child's parents or guardians.

Head Start staff use the following tools to provide a comprehensive education for children and families:

- *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*
A developmentally appropriate classroom-based curriculum. It is the foundation for daily classroom activities, which build on children's interests and strengths to meet individual and classroom learning objectives and goals.
- *Conscious Discipline:*
A developmentally appropriate brain-based social-emotional curriculum that builds resilience in children, families, and educators. Conscious Discipline is used both in the classroom and as our parenting education curriculum.
- *Teaching Strategies GOLD*
A comprehensive, research-based assessment system that supports effective teaching and children's development and learning.
- *SWIVL*
An audio and video coaching tool utilized for staff to receive coaching, ongoing professional development, and continuous program quality improvement.

- *Learning Genie*

An all-in-one digital resource for teachers to have two-way communication with families, family engagement and track in-kind. This tool will also auto-translate for staff and families if needed.

Nap and Rest Policy

1. A child who has completed a nap or rest quietly for 30 minutes will not be required to remain on a cot, or mat.
2. Naps and rest will be provided in a quiet area that is physically separated from children who are engaged in an activity that will disrupt a napping or resting child. Mats, cots, and beds will be placed so there are clear aisles and unimpeded access for both adults and children on at least one side of each piece of napping and resting equipment. Mats, cots, and beds will be placed directly on the floor and must not be stacked when in use.
3. Separate bedding will be provided for each child in care. Bedding and/or blankets will be washed weekly and when soiled or wet.

Child Protection:

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) Department of Health and Human Services Transmittal Notice 77.1 requires that all Head Start program staff report all incidents of suspected abuse and neglect to their local child protective service agency. All NWCA Head Start staff are mandated reporters of any suspected child abuse or neglect.

HEALTH INFORMATION

Medical Services:

Your child is required to have a complete physical, including lab work. Head Start physical exams will be completed at Health Screening Sites in each area or by your family doctor. Prior written approval from Head Start management is needed for financial assistance for all services, including follow-up. You will need Head Start forms accompanying your child on all referred visits. Basic expenses for out-of-area referrals may be reimbursed.

Dental Services:

A dental exam is required to be completed within 90 days after the entry date. Prior written approval from Head Start management is needed for financial assistance for all services, including follow-up. You will need Head Start forms accompanying your child on all referred visits. Basic expenses for out-of-area referrals may be reimbursed.

A qualified calibrated dental hygienist may complete a dental assessment on your child. This will not replace your regular dentist's visit.

Immunizations:

Your child's immunization record needs to be completed at the time of enrollment or made current by the end of our program year. Immunization clinics are held throughout the 4 counties served by Northwest Head Start.

Mental Health Services:

Mental Health Consultants/Counselors provide training for staff and parents and observe at center sessions

monthly. In addition, Family Service Workers and Mental Health Consultants/Counselors are available for individual or family concerns. Referrals will be made upon request.

Ages & Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE) Screening:

As part of the developmental screening, you will be asked to complete a mental health screening. Our agency, in coordination with local school districts and county nursing services, uses the Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social Emotional Screener or the ASQ: SE.

Health Rules at the Center:

- If your child shows signs of illness or has a contagious infection, do not send him/her to the center.
- If there is a contagious illness in the classroom all parents or guardians will be notified within 24 hours via Learning Genie.
- If your child becomes sick while at the center, they will be separated from the other children in the classroom. Your child will remain within sight and sound of staff supervising and the teacher will call the parent or guardian for immediate pickup.
- Only prescription medication can be given at the center. Please make every effort to give your child any medications needed at home. If your child must receive prescription medicine while at the center, you must bring the medicine to the center in the original prescription bottle, labeled, doctor's note, and sign a consent form.
- If your child has been diagnosed with food allergies or is on a doctor-prescribed diet, please be sure to let your teacher know. You will be required to give your teacher a written copy of the child's special diet, listing any/all specific foods the child should not be allowed to have and any other pertinent information.
- Medical and dental emergency procedures are posted in classrooms; please review them when you are visiting the center.
- Regarding COVID-19 quarantine/isolation: We will follow each individual school's COVID plan.

Procedures for Administering First Aid

- All staff will be trained in pediatric and infant first aid within 90 days of their first day of work.
- An individual trained in pediatric and infant first aid will be present in the center during all hours of operation, on field trips and when transporting children.
- Children will always be supervised by staff.
- First aid will be administered for minor injuries.
- In the case of significant but non-life-threatening medical or other emergency, parents will be notified immediately. Parents will be offered the following options:
 - They may pick up the child immediately and transport them to a medical facility
 - In the event parents/ guardians/ emergency contacts cannot be reached or when a delay may jeopardize the child's health, staff members may call 911 and request emergency responder assistance, depending on the severity of the injury.

Nutritious Meals:

Head Start follow the Child & Adult Care Food Program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture which enables Head Start to provide free meals and snacks to all enrollees.

PARENT FAMILY and COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Center Volunteers:

Volunteers are an important part of Head Start. All parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer at the center at least once per year and are welcome to volunteer more regularly. Being a volunteer at the center gives you an opportunity to experience first-hand the social and academic activities that your child participates in each center day.

When you arrive at the center, ask the teacher to show you the center plan so you will know what is scheduled for the day. Some ways you can help out in the classroom are: welcome the children to the center, help children with coats, boots, etc., read to children, and assist with small group activities.

Some rules to follow when volunteering at the center: Volunteers are encouraged to be positive and friendly. Physical discipline of any child is NOT allowed at the center.

If you have a concern about a child's behavior, please discuss it with the teacher. These rules apply to all children at the center, including yours.

Respect for the CONFIDENTIALITY of all families must be kept. Volunteers may not disclose confidential information that they become aware of while working in the center, including the progress of children. ***Pictures may not be taken of children in the classroom utilizing your personal phone, camera, or other devices.***

Remember, volunteering at the center should be FUN! If you feel the center is not fun and enjoyable, please discuss this with your teacher. Communication is the best remedy in most situations.

When parents volunteer to help at the center, any child care expenses incurred during that time may be reimbursed. Parents can pay the childcare provider and ask for reimbursement later or can ask the childcare provider to bill Head Start directly. You may request a Child Care Reimbursement form from your teacher. The Childcare reimbursement maximum of \$30 per day/per child. Any expense over the set amount is the responsibility of the parent.

Pets are only allowed at the center if approved ahead of time.

Home Visits:

Teachers, Family Advocates and other Head Start staff make home visits. The number and structure of home visits vary among communities depending on the number of centers offered to the needs of individual families. A minimum of 2 Home Visits are made by your child's teacher annually, however, participation in Head Start is not contingent upon allowing the teacher into your home.

Home visits for additional family support such as parenting education or crisis assistance are also offered.

Our goal is to create a warm, caring, and respectful partnership with your family. The following guidelines help to create the best and safest learning environment for you, your child and Head Start staff.

- Parent/Caregiver will contact Head Start if it is necessary to reschedule the home visit.
- Adults will keep phone calls/texts, TV, and other outside interruptions and distractions to a minimum.
- Everyone present will be respectful.
- Weapons will be locked or kept in a safe place during the home visit.
- All adults present will be free of the influence of alcohol and non-prescribed mood-altering drugs during the Head Start home visit.

- All adults will be fully and appropriately dressed.
- Parent/Caregiver will limit the number of non-family members present during the home visit.
- Parent/Caregiver will intervene if there is any inappropriate behavior by adults during the home visit.

In the event that any of these issues become a concern, we will discuss it with you and may discontinue home visits.

Conferences:

Parent/Teacher conferences are held three times per year. Conferences will offer a written assessment of the child's intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development.

Parent Reimbursement Rates:

Mileage is reimbursed at the current government rate. (As of 7-1-22 the rate is 62.5 cents per mile). Childcare will be reimbursed at a maximum of \$30 per day per child. Reimbursement forms are available from your classroom teacher, family advocate, or the Head Start office.

Parent Meetings:

Throughout the Head Start program year, each center has parent meetings which give parents the opportunity to discuss issues that affect each community and participate in parenting education activities utilizing the Conscious Discipline parenting curriculum. Mileage and childcare may be reimbursed at the standard rates at parent-only meetings.

Family Partnership Agreement (FPA):

Each family is encouraged to develop a Family Partnership Agreement. The FPA includes identifying family strengths, setting family-identified goals, requesting information and discussing information received.

Family Outcomes Assessment:

The Family Outcomes Assessment is a tool for families to identify their needs and measure growth. Northwest Head Start and Early Head Start also use this program-wide assessment to measure our effectiveness in helping enrolled families improve their lives and the lives of their children.

Policy Council:

The Policy Council consists of Head Start parents from each center site. Meetings are held monthly to discuss issues affecting Head Start and to make decisions about how the program operates. Each site's parent group may elect one Representative and one Alternate Representative to attend Policy Council meetings. Becoming the Policy Council Representative for your site area requires a commitment to attend meetings and be more involved in Head Start. Meetings may be held both in-person and via Zoom. Parents who are members of the Policy Council are reimbursed for mileage and childcare expenses at the standard rates. On-site childcare may also be available. Policy Council members also receive a monthly connectivity reimbursement of up to \$40.00. A meal is provided following in-person meetings.

Health Advisory Committee:

Head Start's Health Advisory Committee is made up of area health care professionals, Head Start parents, and Head Start staff. This Committee meets twice a year to review all aspects of the Head Start health requirements. Members are reimbursed for mileage and childcare at the standard rates.

Minnesota Head Start Association Parent Affiliate Member (MHSA):

The Policy Council elects the MHSA Parent Affiliate Representative. This position requires out-of-area travel 3-

4 times per year to attend MHSA Meetings. Reimbursement rates are the same as Policy Council.

Other Parent Activities:

Special events, parent workshops, and other trainings are held throughout the year on topics of interest to Head Start parents. Parents who attend workshops may be reimbursed for mileage and childcare at the standard rates.

In-Kind:

In-Kind is the way parents and the community help support the Head Start program. The Federal Government grants funds to a Head Start Program with the stipulation that the local community contributes 20% matching funds. These funds are raised by In-Kind.

The following activities qualify as In-Kind contributions:

- Time spent volunteering at the center.
- Time spent doing curriculum-based family home activities provided by your teacher.
- Time and materials used in making things for the center or children.
- Time spent attending Policy Council Meetings.

Please keep track of the amount of time you spend doing Head Start activities with your child. Each month, you will complete either a paper In-Kind sheet or submit In-Kind utilizing the Learning Genie app. Your teacher will help you with this process.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

If a parent or community member feels a Head Start staff person has treated them unfairly, or in a disrespectful manner, he or she may implement the following grievance procedure.

1. Present, in writing, the reason and circumstances surrounding the specific incident to the Head Start Director. The Head Start Director will attempt to resolve the issue within five working days of action.
2. If unsuccessful in Step One, the complaint can then be sent to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will attempt to resolve the issue within five working days of action.
3. If unsuccessful in Step Two, the complaint can be sent to the chairman of the Agency Board of Directors, who will attempt to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the parent or community member.

Any questions related to licensing can be addressed at:
Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Licensing 651-431-6500.

MALTREATMENT OF MINORS MANDATED REPORTING POLICY FOR DHS LICENSED PROGRAMS

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect

Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.

If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

Where to Report

- a. If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.

- b. Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed child foster care or family child care facility should be made to county child protection services
- c. Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in all other facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services should be made to:

County	Social Services	Police Dept.
Roseau	(218) 463-2411	(218) 463-3129
Kittson	(218) 843-2689	(218) 843-3535
Lake of the Woods	(218) 634-2642	(218) 634-1143
Marshal	(218) 745-5124	(218) 745-5411

Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.

- d. Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county social services agency or local law enforcement:
- e. If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call:
- i. **Department of Human Services Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.**

What to Report

- a. Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- b. A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- c. An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Failure to Report

A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report maltreatment that is found to be serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from employment in positions allowing direct contact with persons receiving services from programs licensed by the Department of Human Services and by the Minnesota Department of Health, and unlicensed Personal Care Provider Organizations.

Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Internal Review

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- related policies and procedures were followed;
- the policies and procedures were adequate;
- there is a need for additional staff training;
- the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and
- there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed

- The internal review will be completed by NWCA Head Start Director, with final responsibility with the NWCA Human Resources Coordinator. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, NWCA Executive Director will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Documentation of the Internal Review

- The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

Corrective Action Plan

- Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

Staff Training

- The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The license
- Holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.
- **The mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment in the child care program and must be made available upon request.**

Agency Specific Procedure:

- Following a mandated report of abuse or neglect, staff will notify their supervisor of the report, document this in ChildPlus, and submit a copy of the written report to the Family Services Manager for filing. Upon receipt of notification following the report, staff will provide a copy of the notification to the Family Services Manager.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
civil rights regulations and policy
Discrimination Policy**

In accordance with Federal 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, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) 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. Additionally, program information is available in languages other than English.

To file a complaint alleging discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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

Fax:
(202) 690-7442; or

Email:
program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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