

# **Memorandum of Understanding**

**Between the  
Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services,  
Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and  
Division of County Operations, Office of Community Services,  
Arkansas Head Start Association,  
Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association, and  
Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office**

## **I. PURPOSE**

The underlying objective of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to foster collaborative strategies which result in improved program performance and better outcomes for children and families by improving the working relationship between the Community Action and Head Start networks and among the partners listed above.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

**The Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services** houses the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, the Division of County Operations, Office of Community Services, and receives funding from the Office of Head Start for the Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office

- **Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education**—Act 1132 of 1997, established the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education within the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the Division is to enhance the coordination of child care and early childhood education programs within the state. This coordination ensures a seamless delivery of service to low-income families and those who are moving from welfare to work. Federal funds are to support service delivery and quality improvements are received through the Child Care Development Fund in the Administration of Child and Youth. The Division is comprised of six sections: one regulatory, one compliance, three programmatic and one administrative. The section names are: Child Care Licensing, Compliance Unit, Family Support, Special Nutrition Program, and Program Development. The Division of Child Care and Early Child Education is the grantee for the

Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office. Several Head Start programs receive funding from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood program through the Arkansas Better Chance Program and other funding opportunities.

- **Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office**—The Office of Head Start funded the Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office (AHSCO) in 1996. Funding flows from the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to the Arkansas Head Start Association who has responsibility for the administration of the project. The purpose of the project is to create a visible presence at the state level, which can assist in the development of significant, multi-agency and public private partnerships between Head Start and the state. Partnerships are intended to help build early childhood systems and access to comprehensive services for all low-income children; encourage widespread collaboration between Head Start and other appropriate programs, services, and initiatives and augment Head Start’s capacity to be a partner in state initiatives on behalf of children and families. In addition they facilitate the involvement of Head Start in the development of state policies, plans, processes, and decisions affecting the Head Start target population and other low-income families. The AHSCO is working in eight priority areas as identified in the Head Start Act of 1998. These priority areas are health care, welfare, childcare, education, national services activities, family literacy, activities relating to children with disabilities, and services to homeless children. The AHSCO has also been committed to establishing and supporting an early childhood professional development system with other state partners.
- The Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services (DHS), Division of County Operations (DCO), Office of Community Services (OCS), is designated the lead agency for carrying out Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) activities in Arkansas. In addition, through Act 345 of 1985, the legislature made DHHS/DCO/OCS responsible for carrying out all aspects of the Act. DHHS/DCO/OCS provides funding to assist Community Action Agencies and other eligible entities to reduce poverty, revitalize low-income communities, and empower low-income families and individuals to become fully self-sufficient. DHHS/DCO/OCS provides training and technical assistance to Community Action Agencies and other eligible entities designed to improve program performance. In addition to CSBG,

DHHS/DCO/OCS administers the Weatherization Assistance Program, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Shelter Plus Care Program, and the Emergency Shelter Grants Program.

**The Arkansas Head Start Association (AHSA)** is a private non-profit organization dedicated to supporting child development and family enhancement programs that are significant to the education and development of low-income families. A 24-member board comprised of members from 22 dues paying Arkansas Head Start and Early Head Start grantees governs the AHSA. The governing structure is patterned after the Region VI and National Head Start Association boards. The purpose of the AHSA is to promote and support high quality programs in early childhood recognizing parents as essential partners, by strengthening membership in the four classes of members: directors, staff, parents, friends; acting as an advocate to elevate the status of Head Start at the community, state, and national level. In addition, developing a strong communication system between Head Start programs and other agencies/organizations; and supporting and establishing strong partnerships with agencies and organizations who serve children and families. AHSA is a member of the Region VI Head Start Association and an affiliate member of the National Head Start Association.

**The Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association (ACAAA)** is a private, non-profit organization formed for the purpose of facilitating the objectives of Community Action Agencies--working to eliminate poverty in Arkansas. ACAAA's members are the 16 Community Action Agencies, as well as individual members who support the goals and the work of the agencies and the association. Governed by a Board of Directors comprised of the 16 CAA Executive Directors, the association provides a statewide voice for CAAs in advocacy, policy, programmatic, and legislative issues, which affect low-income individuals, families and communities in Arkansas. Helping to promote and advance programs that assist low-income Arkansans achieve and maintain economic self-sufficiency, ACAAA focuses on research, education, training seminars, coalition building, and networking opportunities. ACAAA will work to integrate the child outcome measures and National Reporting System data to the Results Oriented Management and Accountability (ROMA) goals and report on the performance results.

ACAAA sponsors an annual conference as well as other training and technical assistance opportunities, operates a Peer Assessment/ Assistance Program, and is active in numerous coalition/partnership activities addressing the issues of poverty in Arkansas.

### **III. SCOPE OF THE AGREEMENT**

The Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and Division of County Operations, Office of Community Services, the Arkansas Head Start Association, the Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association, and the Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office have joined forces to promote and provide continuity for the development of collaborative efforts to provide services to children and families.

- A.** The partners will constitute a State Workgroup to provide leadership for the accomplishment of mutual program goals among all partners.
- B.** Each partner will assign at least one staff person to serve on the workgroup. The leadership of the state workgroup will rotate among partners.
- C.** Information will be shared by all partners on a regular basis addressing training and meetings of mutual interest with schedules being provided to all partners.
- D.** The workgroup will focus on the following priority areas and other initiatives as identified by partners:
  - a.** Early Childhood Education Coordination and Collaboration (Head Start and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success, state pre-k program)
  - b.** Training and Technical Assistance
  - c.** Positive Youth Development
  - d.** State Quality Accreditation
- E.** The workgroup will develop an annual workplan to address implementation of its priorities.
- F.** The partners will encourage local program partnerships to work on collaborative strategies, which involve community residents and result in improved program performance and better outcomes for children and families by:
  - a.** Sharing resources,

- b. Coordinating activities,
  - c. Establishing effective lines of communication including the sharing of newsletters, annual reports, program reports, internet sites, and
  - d. Reporting exemplary practices.
- G.** The partners agree to encourage at the Regional, State and local level:
- a. Joint planning and participation in conferences and meetings held by each of the partners, as appropriate, with emphasis on joint presentations and dissemination of informational/training materials.
  - b. Regular coordination among staff from each partner program to provide updates on program developments, related legislation, regulations and policies; and
  - c. Joint planning and support for activities that promote collaborative efforts that directly relate to services for economically disadvantaged families.

#### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOU**

The Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and Division of County Operations, Office of Community Services, the Arkansas Head Start Association, the Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association, and the Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office will support cooperation and coordination among their programs at the Federal, Regional, State and local levels as well as with and among other agencies with programs and resources relevant to the issues and problems here addressed. The partners further agree to distribute this MOU and encourage its implementation at the State and local levels.

#### **V. AMENDMENT/REVIEW/EFFECTIVE DATE**

This MOU, the original of which was effected May 1999 and amended in February 2001, November 2003, and February 2007 was amended as agreed to in writing by all parties. The MOU will be reviewed periodically and will be amended by agreement of all parties. The Partners will inform their respective partners about this memorandum of understanding, which will become effective upon the signature of the authorized officials of the respective organizations.

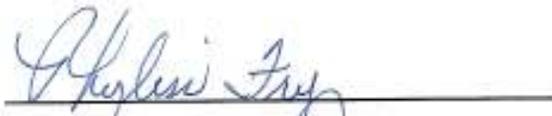
**VI. PARTNERSHIP SIGNATORY**

  
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**John Selig, Director**  
**Arkansas Department of Health & Human Services**

3/2/07  
**Date**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Barbara Sisco, President**  
**Arkansas Head Start Association**

2-16-07  
**Date**

  
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**Phyliss Fry, President**  
**Arkansas Community Action Agencies Association**

2-16-07  
**Date**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Ann Patterson, Director**  
**Arkansas Head Start State Collaboration Office**

2/20/07  
**Date**