



WCCA HEAD START ANNUAL REPORT TO THE PUBLIC

2025-2026

This annual report contains information in accordance with Section 644(a)(2) of the Head Start Act.

This report is available on the Head Start page and Early Head Start page of the agency website, wccaweb.com

Head Start is a comprehensive no fee program for income-eligible families. WCCA Head Start serves children from birth through five years, and pregnant women. It provides children with a developmentally appropriate early childhood education to help them gain the skills needed to succeed in school. WCCA Head Start is funded through federal and state grants, and through generous donations provided by WCCA board members, policy council members, parent volunteers, community volunteers, staff and local area churches, school districts, doctors, dentists, and many community service organizations.

Funding Sources and Budgetary Expenditures

2025-26 FUNDING SOURCES	
U.S. Dept. of HHS – Continuation Grant	2,719,230
Minnesota Dept. of Education	516,337
Pathway II Funding (State of MN)	112,500
Great Start Compensation (State of MN)	61,621
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (CACFP)	153,768
In-Kind/Non-Federal Match Contributions	679,808
Total Funds and Contributions	\$4,243,264

2025-26 FEDERAL EXPENDITURES		2025-26 STATE EXPENDITURES	
Salaries and Fringe	2,152,566	Salaries and Fringe	439,099
Travel	10,647	Travel	24,491
Supplies	91,585	Office Expenses	8,088
Contractual	276,819	Contractual	22,791
Other	160,384	Program Expenses	7,369
Training	27,229	Staff Development	10,102
		Other	4,397
Federal Expenditures	\$2,719,230	State Expenditures	\$516,337

Key Information

An estimated 550 children under five years-old from income-eligible families live in Wright County and western Hennepin County. Approximately 43% of eligible children were served by WCCA Head Start.

	Average Monthly Enrollment	Participants Served	Families Served	Child Medical Exams Completed	Child Dental Exams Completed
Early Head Start	101%	60 children 5 pregnant women	51	92%	60%
Head Start Preschool	100%	178 children	167	99%	88%

Reviews

Agency Audit

The annual agency wide audit was conducted for fiscal year 2025. There were no areas of material weakness identified.

Monitoring Reviews

1. During the week of April 14, 2025, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted a virtual Focus Area-1 federal monitoring review of the Head Start program. The report followed in May of 2025 and showed no areas of non-compliance and no deficiencies. There was one area of concern related to child health and oral health status and care.
2. The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted the Focus Area-2 federal monitoring review the week of March 14, 2022. The monitoring review report followed April 22, 2022 with no areas of concern, no areas of non-compliance, and no deficiencies.
3. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Monitoring Review was completed during March 2024 with two minor findings that were corrected.

Family Engagement

Parent and family engagement in Head Start is about building relationships with families that support family well-being; supporting strong relationships between parents and their children; and nurturing ongoing learning and development for both parents and children. This results in children who are healthy and ready for school. At the beginning of the participants enrollment, WCCA Head Start uses a locally designed assessment to help parents identify strengths and needs. At the end of the program year, we complete the assessment again with some additional questions to measure whether our efforts are meeting the needs of the families we serve.

Monthly, WCCA Head Start offers parent meetings and family engagement events for Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start families. These events give families the opportunity to connect with local resources. During the 2023-24 program year, we started using the Conscious Discipline Parenting Education Curriculum. This curriculum provides a comprehensive approach that empowers parents with skills that create a safe, connected, problem-solving environment for families. It has been found to improve parenting knowledge and skills, increase parents' ability to manage their own emotions and respond to children's challenging behaviors, and improve emotional management and behaviors in children. We offer opportunities for parents to attend our Conscious Discipline parenting groups monthly at the same time as family engagement events and parent meetings, as well as a separate five-week group session. Early Head Start also provides Partners for a Health Baby parent curriculum at weekly home visits.

WCCA has a Policy Council made up of elected Head Start Preschool and Early Head Start parents. The Policy Council meets once a month to review program reports, receive updates on individual classrooms and programs, and make decisions that impact the Head Start program. This is a great chance for parents to develop leadership skills, network with other parents, advocate for children, and represent the voice of the children and parents in the program.

During the 2025-26 program year, 226 Head Start and Early Head Start parents and guardians volunteered in our program in some capacity, which is a decrease from 256 the year before. Parents can volunteer as a member of the Policy Council, attending classroom parent meetings, volunteer in the classroom, or participate in specific at-home activities with their child.

School Readiness

WCCA updates its School Readiness Goals annually using information from:

- The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF), which represents the continuum of learning for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to prepare children for kindergarten,
- Local schools in our service area,
- The Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIPS), and
- Input from WCCA parents and staff.

WCCA Head Start is a member of the *Minnesota Head Start Association* (MNHSA). One of the Association's goals is to improve Head Start programs and policies by identifying common concerns and sharing strategies to analyze and improve children's outcomes. Based on an earlier report for the Minnesota Department of Education, it was recommended by *Teaching Strategies Gold* and the MHSA, that an overall proficiency rate of 75% (based on total points) in each domain, is an appropriate measure of skills required for children to be successful in kindergarten.

WCCA implements multiple strategies to support families and children in a successful transition to kindergarten. These include, but are not limited to:

- The Education Coordinator collects information from schools in our service area, including registration items along with nutrition, transportation, and health services within schools and provides a transition packet to each of these children's families.
- Staff review school specific registration information with families and assist in filling out required paperwork, if needed.
- Staff review the kindergarten readiness skills with families at conferences. They discuss activities families can do at home to further their child's skills and development.
- Staff provide families with a monthly kindergarten readiness calendar. This calendar contains strategies to promote a successful transition along with kindergarten readiness activities to be completed at home.
- Staff implement classroom kindergarten transition activities to help prepare children for the transition into kindergarten.
- Teachers or family advocates attend kindergarten registration nights with families, if requested.
- Staff send families a summer kindergarten readiness skills calendar with strategies to help prepare their child for kindergarten.
- The Health Coordinator sends preschool screening and immunization information to each child's kindergarten transition location.
- Families complete a *Getting to Know My Child and Family* form during spring conferences. This form is designed for families to give the future kindergarten teacher insight into their child, including strengths and known strategies that do and do not work well.

Community Needs Assessment

WCCA's most recent Community Needs Assessment was completed in October 2025.

In the 2025 assessment, significant shifts in community data were noticed since the 2022 Community Needs Assessment, including:

- The total population of Wright County has increased by 6% since WCCA's 2022 Community Needs Assessment.
- The cost of living for an average household of three is \$82,601, which equates to about 310% of the federal poverty guidelines (FPG).
- Communities in the eastern half of the county have a much poverty lower rate (4.8%) when compared to the western half of the county (7.1%). Montrose, one of the county's smaller cities, has a poverty rate of 12.56%.

Top Needs Identified

1) Housing

- a. Our communities need more affordable housing options.
- b. Our communities need to support those who are homeless.

2) Child Care

- a. Individuals and families need help affording childcare costs.
- b. Our community needs more childcare openings for children under the age of three.

3) Transportation

- a. Individuals and families, especially those with disabilities, need access to reliable transportation.
- b. Our communities need public transportation options with non-traditional operating hours.

Additional Needs Identified:

- Employment
- Opportunities for teens
- Food insecurity
 - Survey respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the community's efforts to address hunger.

Additionally, WCCA participates in the Wright County Community Health Collaborative, who recently completed their Community Health Improvement Plan for 2025-2028. This data identified priorities of access to care, economic stability, and social connectedness.