



# Early Head Start Expansion and EHS-CC Partnerships Applicant Survey Summary

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## Introduction

During October 2014, the National Head Start Association administered a voluntary survey to the Head Start and Early Head Start field to gather information about applications for the Early Head Start Expansion and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership Funding Opportunity that closed in August 2014. The survey gathered 223 responses from 47 states and the District of Columbia. Respondents made up about 14% of Head Start grantees, so findings may not necessarily be representative of all programs. Overall, 95% of responses were from established Head Start and/or Early Head Start providers; some respondents were part of organizations that also operated Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, center-based child care, or other forms of child care.

Among the respondents, 187 had considered applying for the General Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA), 8 for the Tribal FOA, and 1 for the Migrant and Seasonal FOA. In the end, 129 respondents applied for Expansion, Partnerships, or Mixed funding and 94 respondents did not.

Of 126 programs that did apply and that completed further questions in the survey, 87% were the lead organization in the application, 9% were partner organizations, and the remainder were supporting applications in other ways.

In terms of the applications they submitted, 64% were involved in applications for EHS-CC Partnerships, 10% in applications for EHS Expansion, and 26% in applications that proposed a mix of partnerships and expansion.

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**Ohio:** This is an exciting opportunity for everyone. There are risks and challenges but the benefits for the children and families far outweigh the fear. We all need to realize it is going to take time and effort to bring the child care partners to EHS standards....we didn't get there in a day either.

## Applicants

### Decision Making

Each group of applicants was asked what the major factors were for choosing their type of application. Listed below are the top four reasons from each group (programs were allowed to choose multiple responses).

Partnership-only Applicants responded:

- 77% Significant unmet need for services in our community
- 75% Desire for a stronger connection between EHS and CC in our community
- 54% Partnership settings best meet the needs of our families
- 43% Appeal of bonus points on the application

Mixed Applicants responded:

- 88% Significant unmet need for services in our community
- 55% Capacity for expansion
- 52% Availability of a limited number of potential partners
- 52% Not all potential partners were of sufficient quality

Expansion-only Applicants responded:

- 83% Potential partners did not meet our necessary quality levels
- 58% Significant unmet need for services in our community
- 50% Lack of potential partners
- 42% Potential partners were not interested in this effort

**Wisconsin:** It was very difficult to find quality partners. The maximum group size of eight children was difficult for centers to work with especially in our area where all centers I contacted had waiting lists into January of 2015. The program ended up partnering with a child care center that will be expanding to a second location if the grant is received. Other centers saw the benefit of partnering but could not justify not being able to serve the same number of children.

Respondents who applied for Partnerships or Mixed Partnerships and Expansion were also asked how they decided which organization would be the lead and how they identified partners. The following responses were most common for both groups (programs were allowed to choose multiple responses; the percentages reflect the proportion of each applicant group that selected each response):

*How was the lead organization for your application chosen?*

- Based on past experience operating Early Head Start or Head Start (80% Partnerships/94% Mixed)
- Based on capacity to administer the grant (74% Partnerships/82% Mixed)
- Based on leadership in the planning process (67% Partnerships/73% Mixed)
- Based on capacity to write the grant (61% Partnerships/76% Mixed)

*How were child care partners for your application chosen?*

- Based on enthusiasm to partner and serve low-income children (70% Partnerships/70% Mixed)
- Based on location within the community (70% Partnerships/64% Mixed)
- Based on established relationships and collaboration (65% Partnerships/55% Mixed)
- Based on history serving the community (54% Partnerships/67% Mixed)
- Based on QRIS or other rating scores (48% Partnerships/27% Mixed)

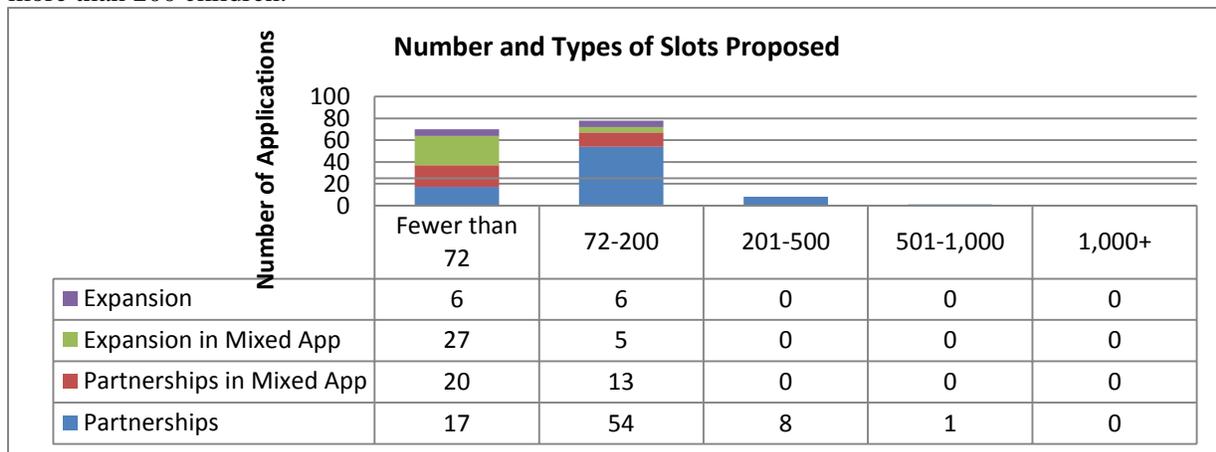
## Communities

Applicants described the service areas they were applying for in the following ways (programs could choose more than one response):

- 59% An established Early Head Start service area with unmet need that one of the applying organizations serves
- 37% One or more high needs zip codes
- 30% A service area that had no established Early Head Start services
- 17% An established EHS service area with unmet need that another organization serves
- 5% A service area that is now served by multiple EHS providers who are applying together

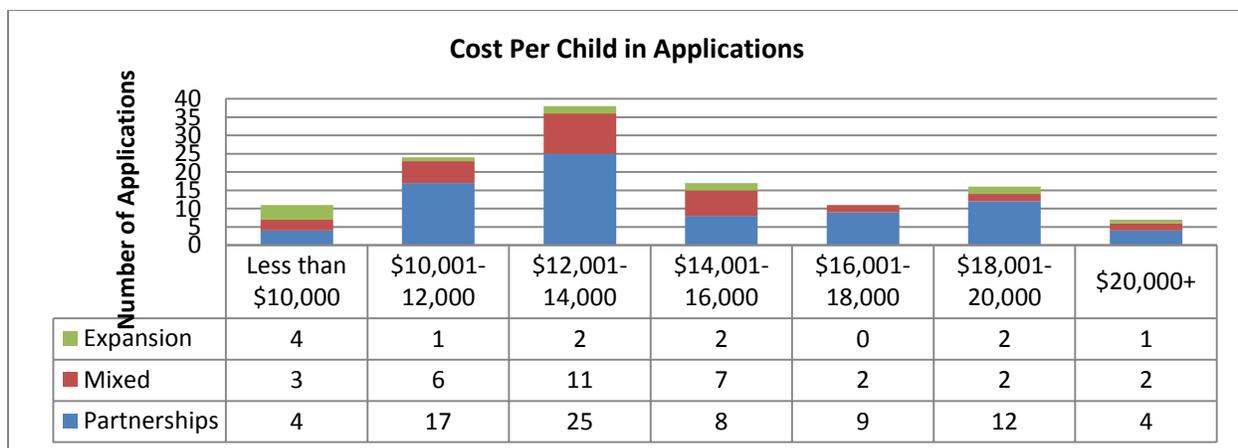
## Number of Slots

The overwhelming majority of applications proposed to serve 200 children or fewer, either through expansion, partnerships, or a mix. A total of nine applications (7% of respondents) proposed to serve more than 200 children.



## Cost Per Child

For all types of applications, there was significant variability in the cost per child submitted in the application. For both Partnership and Mixed applications, the most frequent cost per child was in the \$12,001-\$14,000 range; for Expansion applications, the most frequent cost per child was below \$10,000; however, the range for all types went from below \$10,000 to over \$20,000.





## Non-Applicants

Non-applicants were similarly asked what the major factors were for choosing not to apply. Listed below are the top five reasons (programs were allowed to choose multiple responses).

- 51% Lack of potential partners
- 44% Insufficient time for planning and writing the grant
- 37% Lack of facilities
- 21% Lack of internal capacity for expansion
- 19% Negative past experience with partnerships

The following are a sample of the comments programs offered for why they chose not to apply:

**Alaska:** It was a big leap for us to consider - helping child care partners to meet EHS requirements - we saw this as potentially a huge investment of our already limited future time/energy/efforts. Keeping our own staff and programs at high quality levels has our agency capacity maxed out. To consider helping other partners to meet ever increasing regulatory standards seemed unwise.

**New Jersey, Tribal Grantee:** Our major issue was the lack of interest from day care and family day care programs. However we did have programs that were interested which we would have loved to work with but we couldn't reach the minimum enrollment requirements. We have offered training opportunities to those programs that wanted to participate in the partnership.

**Nebraska:** I know that originally they wanted around 70 children in the partnership. It would be extremely hard for our agency to look at - we serve 4 counties and not one has an infant/toddler center. We would have to work with individual providers which could mean up to 30+ different providers. We had conversations with providers, who asked do we have to meet all the regulations or are they like the state - tell you to fix it but never follow through. When the providers were told they would have to meet all the regulations, with Head Start's help, some were still interested but most dropped out. The providers and our agency decided it might be best to sit this one out and look at next year if the opportunity comes up again.

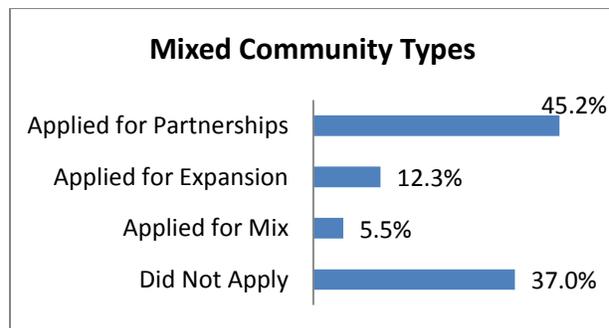
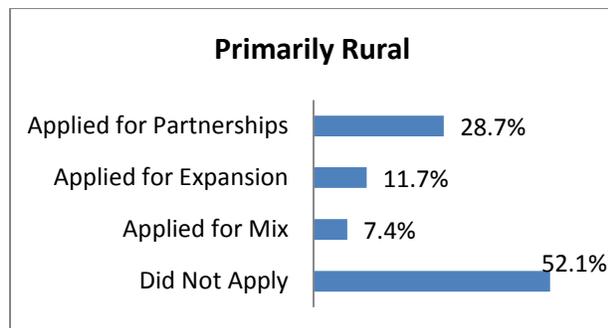
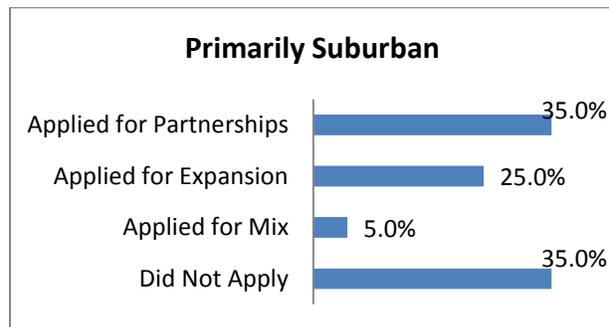
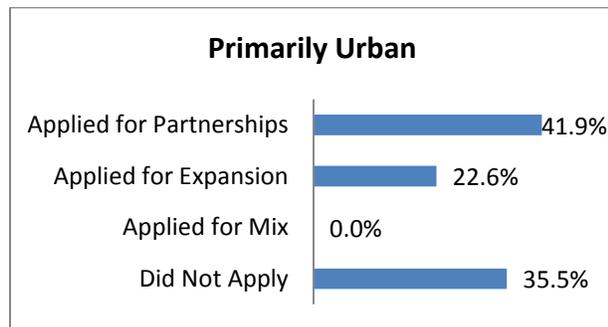
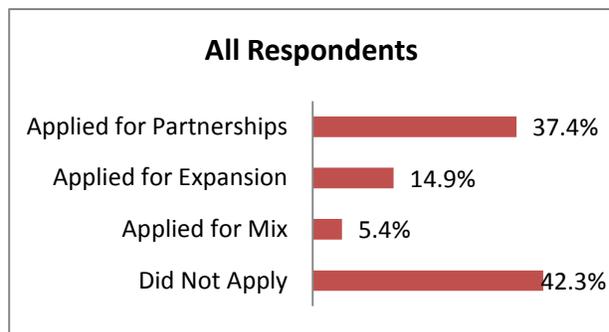
## Major Themes

### Variation by Community Type

Programs taking the survey were asked to identify their service area as primarily urban, suburban, rural or a mix. The largest number of programs identified as rural (42%) followed by mix of community types (34%). Decisions about whether and how to apply varied by community type. This is unsurprising given the different needs and resources of urban and rural communities. Across all community types, programs that applied were most likely to apply for a partnerships-only model. Among Urban, Suburban, and Mixed Community Type programs responding, about 65% applied for some model of grant, but among Rural programs only 48% applied. The chart in red shows the application rates for all respondents, and the charts below show the application rates within each community type.

#### Which best describes your community?

Primarily Urban	31
Primarily Suburban	20
Primarily Rural	94
Mix of Community Types	73



**New York:** Hopefully smaller applications in rural areas will be considered, even if not the highest level of poverty. There may be no other way to reach these children and get the opportunity for quality early childhood development to them!

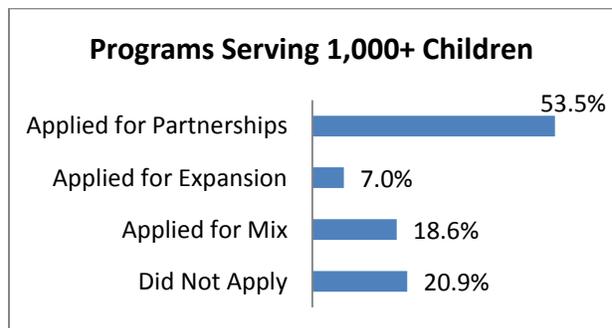
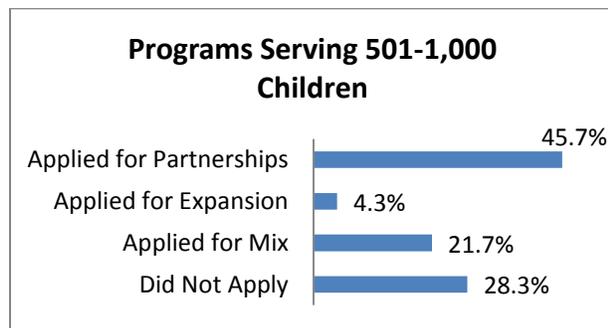
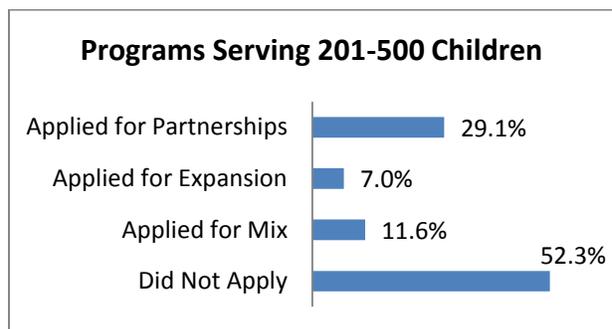
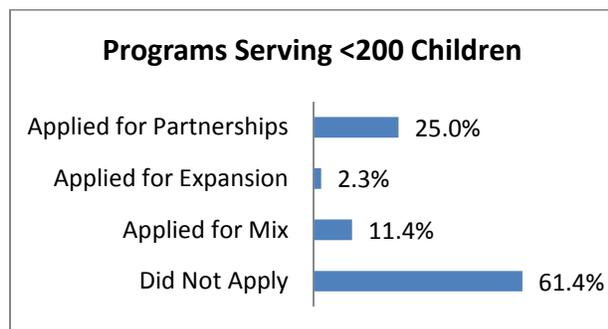
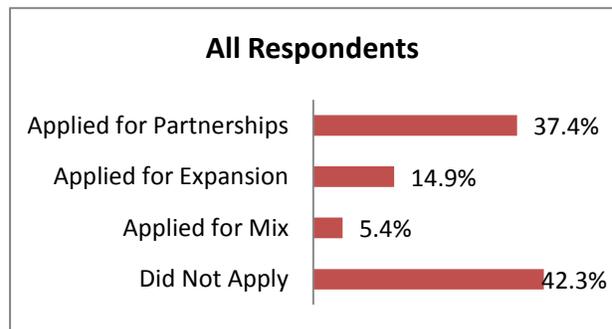
**South Dakota:** The design of the grant is not "friendly" to states with low population. The recommended minimum number of slots (72) and the award floor (\$750,000) promote larger-sized programs than are realistic in communities and states with lower populations. It is evident the reason for these thresholds is to create greater efficiency and stability through increased scope, but this can have a negative effect for communities and states with lower populations.

## Variation by Program Size

Head Start programs vary in size, from small programs serving fewer than 200 children to large grantees serving over 1,000. While overall about 58% of all programs applied, programs serving fewer than 500 children were less likely to apply and programs serving more than 500 children were more likely to apply; nearly 80% of programs serving over 1,000 children applied. This may be due to the established economies of scale in large programs, additional time and capacities of staff for grant writing in large programs, or broader reach of partnerships and relationships for large programs. The chart in red shows the application rates for all respondents, and the charts below show the application rates for different sizes of programs.

If you provide services directly to children and families, about how many children do you serve?

<b>1-10</b>	0
<b>11-200</b>	45
<b>201-500</b>	86
<b>501-1,000</b>	46
<b>1,000+</b>	43



**Ohio:** We have been an Early Head Start grantee since 1995 and we also have a 15-year history of working with child care partnerships. As such, we are gratified that this new effort is being funded through Early Head Start in an effort to raise the quality of child care centers to EHS standards.

**Texas:** We are excited for the opportunity to work with another center to get them up to EHS standards. We are excited to mentor new staff. We believe there are not enough centers willing to work not only to educate the children but to serve families.