EARLY HEAD START-CHILD CARE PARTNERSHIP (EHS-CCP) ANNUAL REPORT

Program Year 2023-24

December 2024

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Introduction

In 2015, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) was awarded an initial EHS-CCP grant to bring together Early Head Start (EHS) and child care through layered funding to provide comprehensive and continuous services to infants, toddlers and families with low-incomes and those who meet other categorical eligibility and priority populations (i.e., children in foster care, families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]). The EHS-CCP grant catalyzed the development of the Quality Improvement Network (QIN), which the DC Council formally authorized through passage of the "Early Learning Quality Improvement Network Amendment Act of 2015."[1] As an EHS-CCP grantee, OSSE makes this annual report available to the public as required by the Head Start Act (section 644(a)(2)). This annual report covers funds awarded during the District's fiscal year 2024 (FY24)—the fifth budget period (March 1, 2023 to Feb. 29, 2024) of the EHS-CCPs five-year project period, federal fiscal year 2023 (FFY23)—and used for activities related to program year 2023-24 (PY24) Sept. 1, 2023-Aug. 31, 2024~~).~~

Between Oct. 1, 2023, and Sept. 30, 2024 (the District's FY24), OSSE invested more than $4.6 million in federal and local funds in a city-wide hub model to support 29 child care partners (CCPs), including 13 child development centers and 16 family child care homes located across the District in Wards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, with the capacity to serve over 400 EHS-eligible children. Through the QIN, OSSE and hub grantees supported CCPs to meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS), comply with DC's child care licensing regulations. QIN provides infants, toddlers and families participating in the program with continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services for high-quality early childhood programming.[2] During FY24, the QIN was implemented through two hub agencies, the United Planning Organization (UPO) and Easterseals, both serving as OSSE's delegate agencies. UPO's work as the hub agency was funded with federal and local funds, and Easterseals' with local funds only. Both agencies provided continuous, intensive and comprehensive child development and family support services; professional development; coaching and other assistance to CCPs to continue meeting the HSPPS.

Throughout FY24, the QIN fostered and promoted a continuity of care approach. All 29 CCPs offered a full-day (no fewer than 10 hours) and full-year (no fewer than 48 weeks) service model. As children transitioned out of the QIN, EHS slots were filled with newly enrolled children.

[1] Early Learning Quality Improvement Network Amendment Act of 2015
[2] Capital Quality

Program Overview

The mission of the QIN is to positively impact the future trajectory of the District's youngest learners, in partnership and collaboration with families and community, by providing an umbrella of services to support their journey towards turning dreams into accomplished goals. Figure 1 presents the QIN program goals.

Figure 1: QIN Program Goals

Provide children with the foundation they need to be ready for school.

Nurture well-being and cultivate a thriving community.

Lead positive system improvements for children and families across DC.

The QIN partners with delegate agencies and CCPs to support childrens' and families' growth, as modeled in Figure 2. Figure 3 presents the full list of CCPs that partner with QIN.

Figure 2: QIN Program Model

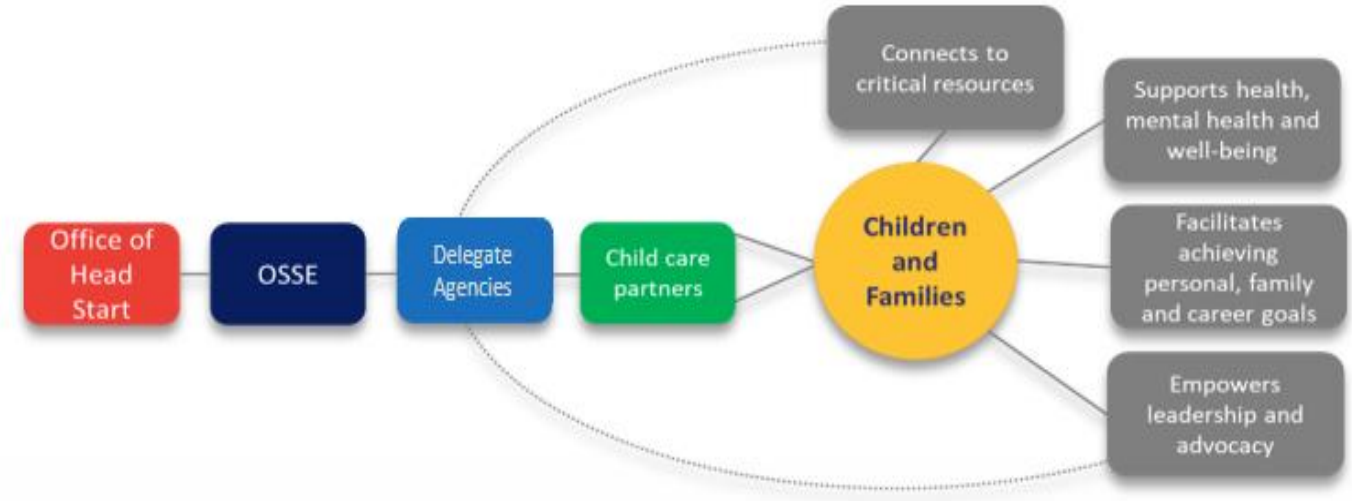


Figure 3: Participating CCPs for FY24

Child Care Centers

1. Bell Teen Parent & Child Development
2. Big Mama's Children's Center
3. Board Of Child Care
4. Community Educational Research Group @ Minnesota Avenue
5. Community Educational Research Group, Inc @ Good Hope Road
6. House of Ruth's Kidspace Child and Family Development Center
7. Jubilee Jumpstart
8. Kennedy Child Development Center
9. Kids Are People Too CDC V
10. Kids Are Us Learning Center
11. Loving Care Day Nursery, Inc.
12. Love First Child Development Center
13. Sunshine Early Learning Center

Family Child Care Homes

1. Blooming Minds CDH, LLC
2. POC Learning Academy, LLC
3. Infancia Feliz CDX
4. Ms. P's Child & Family Services
5. Tiny Tots Childcare Development Home LLC
6. Future Stars Early Learning Center
7. Elsa Gaiem
8. Irma Yolanda Tzul-de Morales/Little Blessings LLC
9. Promoting Love and Wisdom Childcare Home
10. Lubertha Wilson Payne
11. Miriams Growing Seeds Daycare
12. Amen Family Child Care
13. Paulette A. Sansbury
14. Angel's Arena Child Care, LLC
15. LTH Infants and Toddlers Center, LLC
16. Towana McMickens/Kiddie Academy Child Development, LLC

Section 1: QIN Participation

353 children were served in FY24.

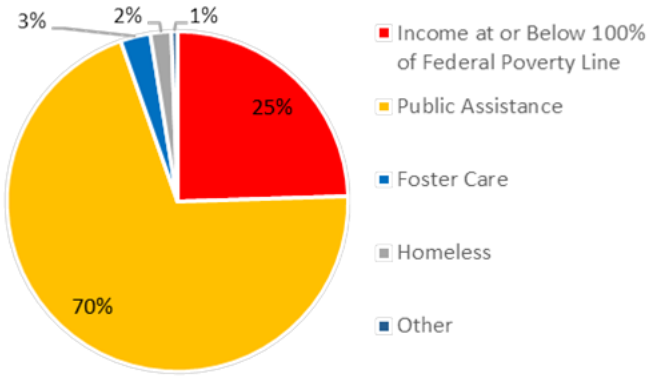
In FY24, the QIN served 353 children who were determined eligible for EHS across the 29 participating CCPs.

On average, 230 children were enrolled in the QIN each month, with cumulative enrollment trending upward over the course of the program year. Of the 266 federally funded slots available, the QIN reached an average of 93 percent funded enrollment.

Of the total number of children served in QIN, 12 percent of children were eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). As such, the QIN consistently met and exceeded the HSPPS requirement of filling at least 10 percent of funded enrollment with children eligible for services under IDEA.

This year, 69.7 percent of children (246 of all cumulative enrollees) were determined eligible for EHS through their participation in federal assistance programs, including TANF and SNAP. Figure 4 provides a breakdown of children served by eligibility type.

Figure 4: Percent of Children Served by Eligibility Type



308 families were served in FY24.

The QIN worked with 308 families on the family partnership agreement (FPA). At enrollment, dedicated family engagement specialists (FES) meet with families to develop year-long goals and map out strategies to reach them, including action steps and milestones. These goals related to housing, educational attainment, deepening connections with community, family relationships, etc.

401
goals created

195
goals in progress

206
goals achieved

Section 2: Child Health Outcomes

100%

had accessible health care

One of the QIN's program goals is to nurture well-being and cultivate a thriving community, including improving health outcomes for children and their families. The QIN worked with families and CCPs to ensure children had an ongoing source of continuous, accessible health care, were up to date with age-appropriate preventive care, immunizations, hearing and vision screenings, and other health markers, following the DC Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) guidelines. This year, 59.2 percent of children were up to date with their well child visits, 57.8 percent were up to date with their immunizations and 100 percent had access to oral care.

342

ASQ-3 developmental screenings completed

To support the development of children, the QIN uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, Third Edition (ASQ-3) to conduct developmental screenings for all children in the program. In FY24, 342 developmental screenings were completed.

354

nutrition assessments completed

In FY24, the QIN completed 354 nutrition assessments to determine gaps in children's nutrition and connect families with additional food resources. Additionally, the program hosted five family cook-along events and six picky eating information sessions. The picky eating sessions were particularly popular among families and the QIN plans to continue the sessions in the next program year. Two hundred and fifty-nine families – 84 percent of all families – received nutrition education.

Partnerships and Coordination

130

reached through partnerships

The QIN directly engaged health care providers to facilitate access to health services and engage families in health education to impart the significance of preventative health care. The QIN partnered with Children's National THEARC mobile health services, which visited five CCPs and served 55 children and 75 families who otherwise may not have had accessible medical care.

65

HSAC participants

The Health Services Advisory Committee (HSAC) convened 65 participants including families, teachers, hub staff, experts and community members, to discuss the healthy development of children. The HSAC focused on discussing community violence, particularly gun violence, its impact on children and strategies to protect them.

65

referrals to *Healthy Futures*

Through a partnership with the Department of Behavioral Health's (DBH) Healthy Futures program, providers' and families received support to build their capacity to promote social emotional development, prevent escalation of challenging behaviors and increase appropriate referrals for additional assessments and services for children.

Section 3: Preparing Children for School

DC's Pre-K Landscape

The District has a variety of child development programs beyond the QIN that are available to families with young children, including EHS, Head Start and universal pre-K across the mixed delivery system. The mixed-delivery system offers pre-K in DC Public Schools (DCPS), public charter schools and community-based organizations (CBOs), that have been designated high-quality through the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP). Pre-K is available to both 3- and 4-year-old children. Nearly 6,000 young students were enrolled in pre-K this year, and 250 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in Head Start.

Child Development and School Readiness

One of the goals of the QIN is to prepare children for school. This was achieved by promoting family engagement in their child's education journey. The QIN facilitated trainings designed to educate and empower families to step into their role as their child's first teacher, promote learning through play, and build their knowledge about child development and milestones. ACT/Parents Raising Safe Kids is the parenting curriculum used to partner with families to raise children in safe, stable and healthy environments and 24/7 Dad is the fatherhood curriculum exclusively used to engage fathers and father figures in developing their parenting and fatherhood knowledge. ACT/Parents Raising Safe Kids and 24/7 Dad were used during meeting, trainings, parent cafés and other family engagement activities to support the parent-child relationships, child development, family literacy and language development.

CCPs used the Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers, and Twos (Creative Curriculum) to support infants' and toddlers' development and learning. A subscription to the online platform Teaching Strategies GOLD (TS GOLD) was made available to all CCPs. TS GOLD is the formative assessment system designed to accompany the Creative Curriculum and is used to track each child's development. Data from TS GOLD reflects how children participating in the QIN compared to Widely Held Expectations (WHEs), which describe the research-based range of knowledge, skills and abilities for a particular age group.

Children participating in QIN *met or exceeded* WHEs

Literacy

73%

Social-emotional

69%

Cognitive

72%

OSSE implements Capital Quality to measure the quality of early care and education programs, including but not limited to QIN CCPs, in areas that are known to make a difference in early learning quality, including the environment, program structure and teacher-child interactions. In FY2024, CCPs were assessed using the Infant and Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) and the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS). Twenty CCPs received a high-quality designation, the highest level of quality measured by Capital Quality.

Children with disabilities receive support through Strong Start, the District's early intervention program, to meet developmental goals, support participation in families' daily routines and prepare for success in school. Strong Start collaborates with the QIN via the interagency steering committee and works alongside the UPO disabilities specialists to support CCPs as they provide services to meet the needs of children with disabilities and support childrens' full inclusion in program activities.

> ***"With the help of Strong Start, my son was able to increase his language capabilities. I also received resources from Early Stages and transition training to get him into a school geared toward his developmental needs."***

For children transitioning out of EHS, teachers and families developed a transition plan. One hundred percent of children participating in the QIN who aged out of the program had a transition plan in place. For children transitioning to pre-K, DC Public Schools (DCPS) offered Early Childhood Transition Week, a shortened week to help ease transition into a school setting. The QIN partnered with My School DC, the District's common application and public school lottery for all DCPS and public charter schools serving pre-K students, to communicate and provide the supports families need to decide on the right school and/or education setting for their child.

Section 4: Family Engagement and Services

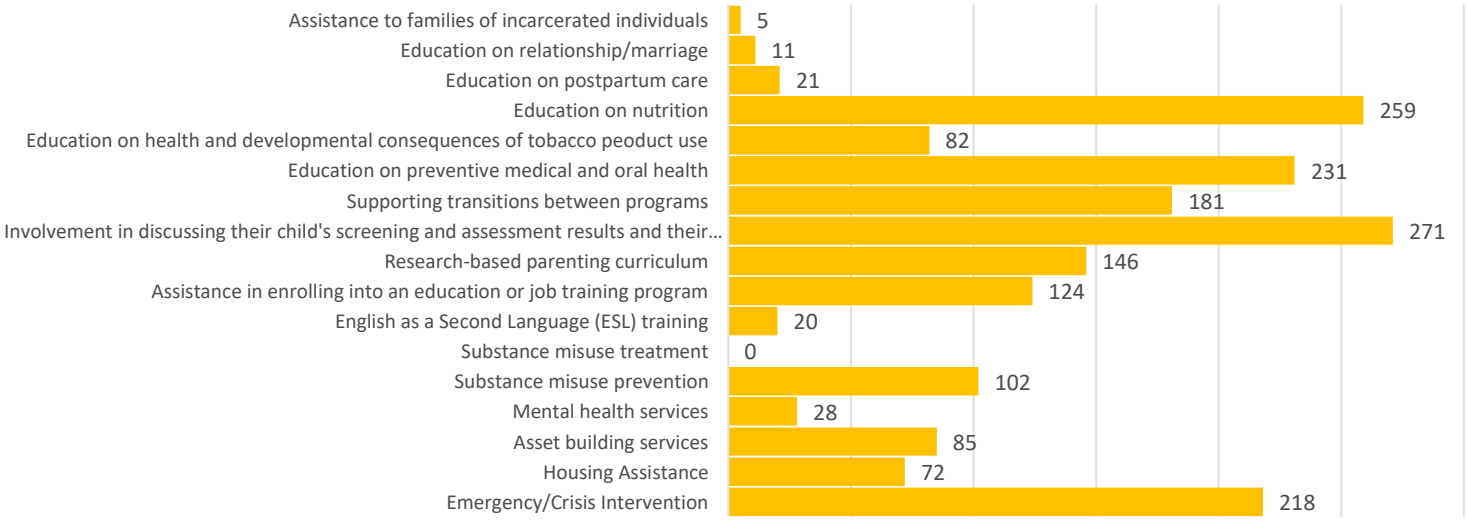
Each CCP was assigned a Family engagement Specialist (FES), who worked with families to identify their needs, connect them with resources and support them to reach personal and family goals. These efforts were guided by results of the family needs assessment, a tool to develop and envision family goals in six distinct areas:

- ✓ Family Well Being
- ✓ Positive Parent Child Relationships
- ✓ Family as Life Long Educators
- ✓ Families as Learners
- ✓ Family Connections to Peers and Community
- ✓ Families and Advocates and Leader

98.4 percent of families who participate in QIN received services in program year 2023-24.

Families met with their FES to discuss and reflect on their experiences in these areas, which then informed how the FES provided support for their unique needs and desired areas of growth. Each family's needs were written into the FPA, which included goals and action steps. Figure 5 shows the services families connected with FY2024 this year based on the results of the family needs assessment.

Figure 5: Services Families were Connected With

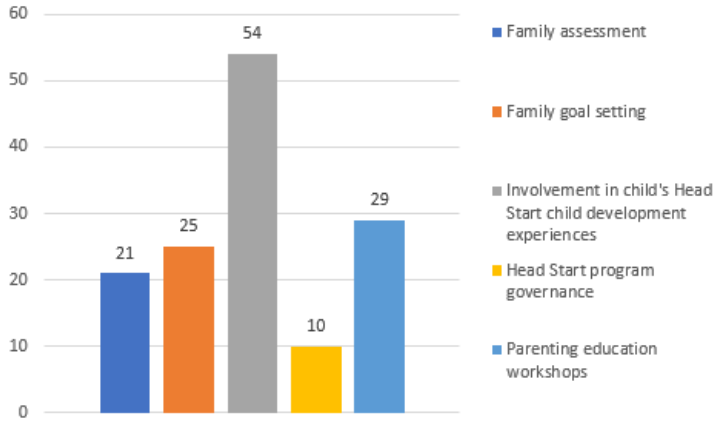


Throughout the year, FES connected with families through phone calls, messages, emails and informal conversations at pick-up and drop-off. FES served as part of the families' support system, which included the child's teacher, nutrition specialists, education specialists and a peer community of other families.

Father and Father Figure Engagement

Engaging fathers and father figures through family engagement activities and specific outreach actions designed with male family members in mind continues to be a priority for the QIN. This year, fathers and father figures were engaged through several types of activities, as seen in Figure 6.

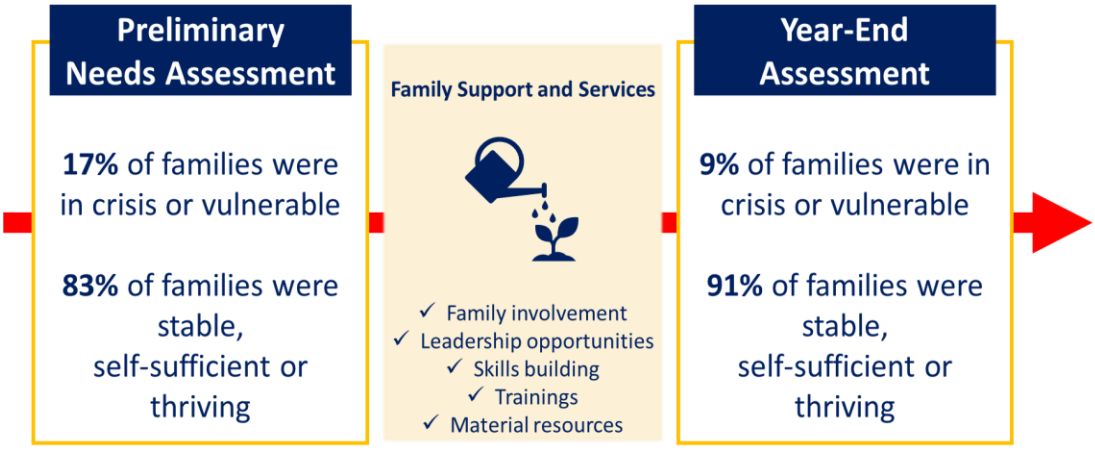
Figure 6: Father and Father Figure Engagement



While the FES is the primary point of contact for families, the QIN engaged families through other means, including leadership opportunities such as policy council and parent committees, parent café discussions, trainings, education and workforce programs, and community events. The QIN also connected families with direct services and material goods, such as diapers, seasonal clothing and foodstuffs. This year, the hubs hosted family trainings on topics such as the ACT/Parents Raising Safe Kids curriculum, self-care and wellness, and childhood development. Overall, 98.4 percent of families who participate in the QIN received support services this year. A year-end analysis found more families reported that they were stable, self-sufficient or thriving than at the start of the year, as seen in Figure 7.

> ***"QIN gives families hope through training and resources. When parents are happy, the child is happy."***

Figure 7: Family Outcomes as Reflected in Family Needs Assessment Results



Section 5: Budget and Expenditures

Funds Received

During FY24/FFY23, OSSE was in its fifth budget period (March 1, 2023-Feb. 29, 2024) of the five-year project period for EHS-CCP grant number 03HP000186. The total federal funds received were $3,143,485 which included funds for program operations, training and technical assistance (TTA), cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA), quality improvement (QI) and supplemental. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the federal funds received during FY24/FFY23.

Table 1: Federal Funds Received by Funding Type

Funding Type	Amount
Program operations	$2,542,247
TTA	$54,544
COLA/QI	$296,694
Supplemental	$250,000
TOTAL	**$3,143,485**

Federal funds received for program operations were allocated to OSSE; OSSE's delegate agency, UPO, and Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), the QIN's infant and early childhood mental health provider. Additionally, OSSE awarded UPO $1,654,174 in FY23 funds as a local match, which includes the required non-federal share of $649,198 (20 percent of the federal award) as well as an additional $1,004,976 in local funding to further support the QIN. In total, the District allocated $4,797,659 in combined local and federal funds to implement the QIN. Table 2 provides an overview of funds allocated to each entity by funding source.

Table 2: Budget by Entity from all Funding Sources

Entity	Federal		Local	Total (Federal + Local)
	Program operations	TTA		
OSSE	$474,000	$0	$0	$474,000
UPO	$2,367,808	$54,544	$1,654,174	$4,076,526
DBH	$247,133	$0	$0	$247,133
TOTAL	**$3,088,941**	**$54,544**	**$1,654,174**	**$4,797,659**

Expenditures

This section examines budget and expenditures for FY24/FFY23 as reflected in the Enterprise Grants Management System (EGMS), the system used to track expenditures and reimbursements, supporting financial documentation and invoices. OSSE sub-awarded federal and local funds to UPO to implement the QIN program.

Federal Funds

OSSE received a total of $474,000 in federal funds, all of which were budgeted and expended on salaries and benefits of four full time equivalent (FTE) employees supporting the administration of the EHS-CCP grant, adherence to the HSPPS and implementation of the QIN.

DBH received a total of $247,133 in federal funds, all of which were budgeted and expended on salaries and benefits of two FTE mental health consultants to promote mental health, social and emotional well-being, and overall health and safety.

UPO received a total of $2,422,352 in federal funds which included $1,821,114 for program operations, $296,694 for COLA/QI, $250,000 supplemental and $54,544 for TTA.

UPO budgeted these funds for salaries and benefits for 21 staff supporting coaching, health, nutrition, TTA and program administration; professional services for a subscription to ChildPlus, a data management software; shared services to provide CCPs with business supports, cleaning services, pest control and substitute services; supplies and materials for the purchase and storage of diapers and wipes; other objects including stipends to teachers and directors, incentives to CCPs so support enrollment and TTA and indirect costs incurred as the delegate agency. Table 3 provides an overview of funds budgeted and expended by cost category as found in EGMS.

Table 3: Federal Funds Budgeted and Expended by Cost Category

Cost Category	Budget	Expended	Balance
Salaries and benefits	$1,214,837.57	$1,204,512.48	$10,325.09
Professional services	$364,835.15	$350,000.00	$14,835.15
Equipment	$0	$0	$0
Supplies and materials	$97,473.84	$97,473.84	$0
Fixed property costs	$0	$0	$0
Other Objects	$525,026.70	$506,734.88	$18,291.82
Indirect Cost	$220,179.74	$215,835.21	$4,344.53
TOTAL	**$2,422,353.00**	**$2,374,556.41**	**$47,796.59**

Local Funds

UPO received a total of $1,654,174 in local funds. UPO budgeted these funds for salaries and benefits for 24 staff supporting family engagement, health, nutrition, Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance (ERSEA) and program administration; supplies and materials for the purchase and storage of diapers and wipes and indirect costs incurred as the delegate agency. Table 4 provides an overview of funds budgeted and expended by cost category as found in EGMS.

Table 4: Local Funds Budgeted and Expended by Cost Category

Cost Category	Budget	Expended	Balance
Salaries and benefits	$1,451,827.86	$1,451,827.86	$0
Professional services	$0	$0	$0
Equipment	$0	$0	$0
Supplies and materials	$8,166.84	$8,166.84	$0
Fixed property costs	$0	$0	$0
Other Objects	$0	$0	$0
Indirect Cost	$194,179.30	$194,179.30	$0
TOTAL	**$1,654,174**	**$1,654,174**	**$0**

2023 Financial Audit

The latest DC audit is found here:

District of Columbia Annual Comprehensive Financial Report 2023