



## News from: Human Services Department

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 29, 2016

#### **City of Oakland Receives Head Start Grant Award**

**Oakland, CA** – The City of Oakland has secured over \$16 million in federal funding to provide comprehensive and full day early childhood learning experiences to 1,038 children and families throughout Oakland. This funding will be used by the City to provide high quality services for low-income children ages zero to five. The Oakland Unified School District’s transitional kindergarten program has expanded and will serve more preschool children.

Media Contact:

Dana Perez-St. Denis  
Human Services Department  
510-238-3247  
dperez@oaklandnet.com

“The City of Oakland is maximizing resources to provide its youngest residents with effective, full-day early education that will be the foundation for school and future career success,” said Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf.

Although the amount allocated is 86% of what Oakland previously received, the City will continue to use its award from the US Health and Human Services Department, Office of Head Start to provide high quality early childhood learning experiences and comprehensive family support services. Services will be provided at over 13 centers throughout the City, along with our delegate agency, The Unity Council. An additional \$2.6 million to the YMCA of the Central Bay Area will enable this agency to serve over 180 children ages 0-5 in East Oakland, primarily in the 94605 zip code.

In the coming year, Oakland Head Start will *quadruple* the number of City provided Early Head Start slots from 32 to 140, with a total of 432 slots provided including our delegate and partners. Oakland Head Start pre-school openings will reduce from the current 1,215 to 606, but Oakland Unified School District will more than make up for this change through its enrollment in Transitional Kindergarten.

This change in the City of Oakland grant is in response to federal Head Start’s policy shift toward serving children in full day programs versus the traditional part day model and providing services to our very youngest children ages 0--3. As the Oakland Unified School District expands its Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program for four year olds, there is an opportunity for Head Start to focus on the very earliest years of development thereby creating a seamless system of early care for families.

The new Head Start guidelines are based on research confirming the long term developmental benefits of an early childhood education – particularly in the earliest years. As a result, every City of Oakland Head Start child will now be served for a full day and for a full school year, dramatically increasing the education and support these children and families will receive. “We recognize that the required changes will mean a shift for some families, so we’ve put in place the tools to support them and their children during this transition,” said Sara Bedford, Director of the Human Services Department.

Oakland Head Start’s deep partnership with community agencies including St Vincent’s

News from:  
Human Services Department

Head Start Grant Award

June 29, 2016

Page Two

Day Home and Brighter Beginnings will continue. The City will also embark on new partnerships with the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and Laney College providing Head Start wrap around support services. The City is very pleased to be working with OUSD and others to create a landscape of early childhood opportunities for families and to improve the overall quality of programming throughout Oakland.

# # #