FY 2013 Monitoring Webcast

Rick: At this time, I would like to now turn the call over to Adia Brown to begin our presentation. Adia, please go ahead.

Adia Brown: Thank you, Rick. Hi. Welcome to the FY 2013 Grantee Webcast. We are excited to be back again with you this year. We were here last year and we keep coming, so we're really happy to be here and do the grantee webcast for all the grantees that are out there. We know we also have special guests who are on the call. There are also program specialists in Regional Offices. There are T/TA providers on this call. So, we welcome everyone who's sitting in and who's going to listen to our FY 2013 Webcast. I'm Adia Brown from the Office of Head Start and I'm here with Ross Weaver. Hey, Ross.

Ross Weaver: Good day, everyone. I'm Ross Weaver, the Director of Quality Assurance, and I look forward to this webcast. As Adia said, this is my second year – the fifth year, I believe, for Office of Head Start – doing this, and hopefully we'll continue for many more years.

Let me get started by just going over our agenda for today. There'll be the overview of the Head Start monitoring; an on-site monitoring review team will talk about standardizing the methodology. We'll also be talking about the Head Start Monitoring Protocol, protocol structure enhancements for 2013, monitoring management systems, and then finally, planning and – and the importance of DHSCS data.

The overview of Head Start monitoring is really – the monitoring system is really designed to evaluate the multiple levels of grantee performance. For many years, the monitoring system only evaluated grantee non-compliances. During the last five years, there's been an effort to – for the monitoring system to include multiple indicators of Head Start and Early Head Start performance. Adia, can you talk a little bit more about what those levels are?

Adia: Sure, I can, Ross. You know, one of the things that we always have to deal with when we're doing these webcasts is a little bit of technology stuff. So I'm playing with the slides and they're not necessarily moving the way that I like them to. But one of the things I want to tell you guys is that we don't just monitor compliance. One of the things that people think about the OHS monitoring system is that it's just a compliance-only monitoring system, and it really isn't. And hopefully what you guys can see on the screen is that the OHS monitoring system really evaluates across a continuum. We actually monitor strengths. We also monitor every area where a grantee is in compliance. We monitor where there are concerns with a grantee, and we actually send those concerns to the – to the regional offices so they can help you with technical assistance. And, yes, we do monitor non-compliance and deficiencies in an agency.

So, let me give you a little overview of the monitoring system and the software based on the tool that we have. So the OHS monitoring software really is an instrument. It's an instrument that we actually use so that we can measure what's happening with grantee compliance. Now, I'm going to work with our slide person right in the back and let her know that I'm actually on slide number six. It talks about the overview of Head Start monitoring. It's a blue slide with gray boxes; hopefully that's what all of the participants see on the screen.

So the overview of the monitoring system that we're going to do today is we're going to tell you, the grantee, and everyone else on the call about the standardized methodology; about the professional review pool that we have – and we have done lots of work to really improve the reviewer pool; the comprehensive monitoring instrument that we use – we call it the OHS Monitoring Protocol; the key indicators of program performance; and the usable data that we collect.

Ross: The on-site review team is pretty similar to the way it was in 2012. It'll consist of the team leader, who will look at program governance and management systems; there will also be reviewers that will look at fiscal and fiscal integrity. The child development and education, that individual will look at the teacher files, reviews, also child files. They'll overall look at the early childhood education section. There'll be a family and community engagement person who will look at ERSEA, staff files, and review – reviewer staff files. Finally, there will be a health – child health and safety person who, again, will look at child files with the help of both the early childhood education person and the family/community engagement person. Obviously, we'll be – they'll be looking at files from the perspective of content areas that they're looking at. And finally, the last individual on the review team, for those programs that operate Head Start and center-based Head Start program, would be the CLASS reviewer. Do you want to talk a little more?

Adia: No. You know, I think – Ross, I think you covered it. And there's tons of people who come out on review, but not as many as there used to be.

Ross: [Laughter] That's right.

Adia: So, we have a pretty concise, small review team for all of the grantees. I'm going to tell you a little bit about what we're calling our standardized process to promote consistency. This is something that we really have learned about over the course of many years of doing on-site monitoring. And one of the things that we know about on-site monitoring is that we want to ensure that every grantee gets a consistent and standardized review. So, we've worked really hard at the Office of Head Start to make sure that what we've done for all of the reviewers is really give them a standardized methodology process, and that methodology includes a standard instrument. All grantees are familiar with the instrument.

And, Ross, I'm very excited to – to say that today most grantees have gotten the Protocol. You can go online and you can click into a learning forum that really will help you understand the Protocol, and you can pull it down for yourselves either during this webcast or afterwards. We also have something in our software that we call the standardized evidence assessment. We use something called the Evidence Assessment System, and what that does for the Office of Head Start is it actually takes all of the evidence that the reviewers collect and it puts it into a – it categorizes it for the Office of Head Start so that we can better understand what happened during your review.

Many grantees who are getting reviewed this year and weren't reviewed next year will not be familiar with our standardized process for random – for random sampling. This is something that we'll talk about a little bit more during the presentation, but what we do it is that – our software now actually randomly selects classrooms, files, both staff and teacher – well, staff, teacher, and child files from all agencies, and we have a process where the computer actually pulls that for us. And finally, we have a process that's standardized for OHS determinations. And this assures that when we see evidence at one grantee and we see it at another grantee, that we actually make the same determination based on the information that we see. So, hopefully folks will really enjoy the standardized methodology this year, and reviewers have lots of tools to help them do it pretty much the same at every grantee.

Ross: One of the things that Adia mentioned early on and – and I want to just re-emphasize is, for 2013, a lot of things remain the same as was in 2012. And I think that's because we've learned a lot over the years and now we're more in – just fine-tuning certain areas to make it more consistent. For instance, the monitoring protocol structure as we introduced last year will be remaining same. There's the – the Protocol, which is broken into really two areas: one – one area that looks at program administration and the other that looks at grantee services. Under the program administration, specifically there are – we look at four content areas. There's Management Systems, Program Governance, Fiscal Integrity, and ERSEA. On the grantee service side, we look at the Child Development and Education, Family and Community Engagement, and Child Health and Safety.

The Head Start monitoring system uses key indicators to identify quality performance and to look at how well the grantee performs in each of the monitored areas. Key indicators were developed using past monitoring data, compliance and non-compliance, review of the Office of Head Start monitoring history, content experts, policy development review, and research on best quality – best indicators of quality. Adia, do you want to talk?

Adia: So, you know, Ross, you did a lot of work really to come up with the key indicators. I think that folks don't understand – I think sometimes people think that we look at all of the Performance Standards, and we've gotten so many different numbers – there's a 1200 Performance Standards, there's 2000 Performance Standards. People really think that we look at every Performance Standards that exist. But over the course of time, what the Office of Head Start has really understood is that there are really key indicators that help us understand if a grantee is meeting these key indicators, we can most likely assume that they're meeting all of the Performance Standards. So, I think it's really exciting for us to explain that to grantees and really help them to understand that the key indicators that are in the Protocol really tell us a lot more about the program.

Ross: And you have some examples of that? Alright. Good.

Adia: And here is my example. I have an example to share with the grantee. This is an example – this is Child Health and Safety. And if you look at your screen, you'll see that Child Health and Safety really has six key indicators. So, the six key indicators of Child Health and Safety are access to health and dental care, screening and referrals, safe physical environments, healthy practices and routines, appropriate group sizes, and transportation and supervision. So when we come into your program, we actually look at those key indicators and determine whether or not your program is actually doing well in Child Health and Safety overall.

The way that we do that is we have in the Protocol something that's called compliance measures. And what these compliance measures do is they actually help us to understand how well you're meeting the six key indicators. So, the example that's on the screen right now is – are the child measures – or the compliance measures for Child Health and Safety indicator number four. Now, indicator number four was healthy practices and routines, and if you look on your screen, you'll see that there are eight things to help us understand whether or not the grantee actually has healthy practices and routines. So, we look at things that – like hand washing or we look at things like diaper changing, and that really helps us understand. If you do those things right, you probably have good healthy routines. Another thing that we look at: teeth brushing. That's a really important thing that we want to make sure that Head Start programs do, and it really helps us understand how you perform in the – the key indicator of Child Health and Safety.

Finally, once the review team has actually looked at all the key indicators and looked at all of the compliance measures that help them understand those key indicators, they then look at evidence – the evidence assessment system. And within the evidence assessment system, they actually say, "Oh, I've collected all of the – all of this data, I've looked at all the measures, what do those measures actually mean?" And they have – they get an opportunity to pick from several selections. When they look at all of their evidence, they actually pick a selection that – that best matches the evidence that they collected.

So, lots of people think that the review process is sort of subjective and that the reviewer's actually making decisions. Actually, the reviewer is not making the decisions. The reviewer's actually looking at their evidence, selecting a match, and then that match comes into the Office of Head Start and we look at it to determine how well the grantee did in each of the key indicators.

Ross: One of the things that we talked about in 2012 Monitoring Protocol, which I think was a good step in the right direction, and that was to really focus on having more time for interviews with staff, parents to understand your program's procedures and to better understand what reviewers would be looking at to help reviewers focus in on the areas that they needed to. For 2013, we're keeping that similar, but we've made some enhancements. Some of those enhancements include streamlined interview questions to ensure that they are user friendly, re-aligned evidence collection process in a way to provide program staff with increased opportunities to explain the program's operation. I think that's critical. It's important that we understand from your program staff and that they're provided with opportunities to explain how your program operates.

There'll also be increased integration of document reviews with interviews to provide program staff with an opportunity to explain the content and use of key documents. In that case, what we're talking about is that we want program staff with the reviewer when they're reviewing documents and files so that they can see what the reviewer's looking at and if the reviewer has questions, can help answer those questions. So again, it's more trying to enhance the process of really understanding how your program operates.

Adia: And you know, Ross, I do think that grantees should take advantage of the opportunities that we have for them in the interview process, in the document review process. A lot – lots of times grantees really feel like, "Hey, I didn't really get a chance to tell you about my program." And the way that we set up the protocol in the standardized methodology for reviewers, it really is to help the grantee have that opportunity to tell us everything they want to tell us about their program and how it works. So, I hope that the grantees out there really do take advantage of that. It's – it's definitely an important thing.

I'm going to tell you a little bit about some other enhancements that we made to the Protocol. So, one of the things that everyone knows, I – I said in – in another presentation, you really, Ross, had to be living under a rock if you didn't know this – is that the Office of Head Start really has focused a lot on school readiness. Grantees have gotten school readiness calls, their program specialists have been engaging with them three times a year. There's just a lot of information that's happened around school readiness, and the Protocol has definitely changed to reflect those – to reflect all the things that you know about school readiness.

The first thing we did to enhance the Protocol was we revamped, we revitalized, we just refurbished the whole CDE section of the Protocol. We worked with all the content area experts, like Michelle Plutro and Jamie Sheehan and Sarah Merrill; we worked with all of the folks back at the Office of Head Start to make sure we really got this right. And so, the first thing we did was we actually added the new regulations that are under 1307 to the Protocol so that we could better review those and so that grantees would be prepared for what we would be looking at in school readiness. There's four key indicators in school readiness. So we look at school readiness; we look at your curriculum selection and how you actually implement it. And the second part is really important. I think a lot of times we came out to review – to grantees and we said, "What curriculum do you use?" and we – you said, "Creative Curriculum," and we said, "Okay."

I feel, this year, that you're going to really need to be prepared for the reviewers to ask you a lot more questions about how you actually implement that curriculum and how it helps you move toward school readiness. We're looking at the individualization of services and we're also looking at quality teaching and learning. We did that last year with CLASS; we'll continue to do that. And that's all part of the new CDE protocol. Here's a slide that actually shows you what those four key indicators look like in the Protocol. And so when you see the new Protocol, you'll see that we have them all lined out and that we have the key indicators to help you.

Finally, we actually wanted to put the pie back up here because we know that folks are really familiar with this and this helps you get an idea of what we're looking at in 2013 as it relates to school readiness. The first thing that we want to know is whether or not you're looking at the five essential domains. It has been a very important thing for the Office of Head Start. People have really been talking about it and working on it. And so when we come out to monitor your program this year, we'll also be looking to see how you handle the five essential domains and how you ensure that children make progress in all five.

The next thing that we want to look at is how you assess – your assessment of the process in which the program creates your school readiness goals. So we want to look at how did you decide which would be the best school readiness goals for your program. We're not just looking for a one-to-one correspondence. So, we're not just looking to see if you took all the state school readiness goals and automatically matched them to your Head Start school readiness goals. What we're looking to see is how did the grantee actually decide on their school readiness goals and what would work for their local program. Where we – we want to ask you questions like, "How did you consider your state early learning standards?" or "How did you consider the expectations for children's – for children who are going on to another school environment or who are moving from Early Head Start to Head Start?" So, we'll ask you lots of questions that relate to those things to get an idea of what you did to develop school readiness goals that fit your children the best.

Ross: I think the last bullet there is also critical in terms of being sure that the program has consulted with parents of the children participating in the – in the program. We know that the parent involvement in – in Head Start is one of the cornerstones, and it's just important that we never forget that we need to involve and engage parents in this whole process, as they are the primary educator for their child and have the greatest influence on their child's development.

Adia: I think that's a good point, Ross; and it goes right into my next slide that really helps the grantees understand there's other things for school readiness that we really want to understand about your program. For example, how did you aggregate and analyze your data? And when we think about that, we want to know whether or not you did it three times per year, for most programs. For Migrant programs and programs that operate for a shorter time period, we – we're going – we want know whether or not you did it two times a year.

We're also looking to see how did you handle dual language learners and what do you do with the data that you know about them. How do you make sure that they're progressing in their own language as well as their acquisition towards English? And this is a birth-to-five program. We don't want anyone to think, looking at 1307 or looking at the new Protocol, that this doesn't really cover all of your age groups. So, school readiness is really about birth to five.

]We also want to know how you use your school readiness data. What do you know about children's progress and where – what their status is? Are they making more progress than what is just developmentally appropriate? Are they further? Are they behind? And what do you do with those children when you find those things out? We want to know if you use the school readiness data to individualize for children, to make things different, to make sure that they have a better chance when they get to their next school environment. And we also want to know whether or not you use that data for program improvement. Once you aggregate all of your child-level data, what does it tell you about your program and what do you need – what you need to do differently to promote school readiness in the future. And reporting results is really where we definitely want to know how do you report your – your achievement of goals and how do you report progress to your parents, to your community, to the staff. These are very important things that we're – we're going to be looking at when we monitor you.

And – and my last thing just re-emphasizes that a little bit: making sure that when you're reporting your results that parents are definitely included in that.

Ross: Another area that we've enhanced for 2013 is really looking at the fiscal part of our – component of our review. We've realigned fiscal protocol into six key areas – indicators: financial management systems, reporting, procurement, compensation, cost principles, and facilities. And there's really going to be more of a testing of transactions versus just looking at records and – and seeing what's there. We're going to test to see how accurate those – a program is operating in the fiscal area.

Adia: I think that's a good segue into where we're going next. The fiscal area was improved a lot in the 2013 Protocol, and so what grantees really have to think about is reviewers – fiscal reviewers are going to be coming in and they'll be doing a lot more transaction testing. So, this is something that you need to think about as you prepare for your review, making sure that you have all of your transactions clearly documented so that when the reviewer needs to look at them you have everything ready and available. Do look at the 2013 Protocol so that you can get a hint into what things the fiscal reviewer will want to know.

So, I want to talk a little more about the standardized approach to the on-site – on-site process. What all grantees need to know is that, for the very first time, we're doing this call with you and the review team leaders at the same time. So we have the review team leaders on the call today, and this is very purposeful because we want everyone to understand that there's definitely a standardized process for reviews. We want grantees to understand it; we also want team leaders and reviewers to understand it. Some of the things that we've actually standardized in the process is – is that there are some common things that every grantee should get when they get an on-site review. One of the things we've done is we've standardized the interview schedule.

So, every grantee now should know that most of your interviews will occur at the very beginning of the week. We want to interview your Head Start director, your content area leads, all of your management and key staff on Monday. We feel like by doing our interviews on Monday, this really helps us understand your program before we get out and we start doing observations or we start doing document reviews. We want you to tell us who you are. We want – you want – we want you to explain your grantee operations. We want you to tell us how you work. Once we understand that, then we can move from those interviews into other things such as observations or transaction reviews. But every grantee should know that we're going to do your interviews first just so that we get to know you.

The other thing that we're going to be doing is, for every document that we look at at – at the grantee, we need for you to have staff available to go through those documents with the review team. We no longer sort of want – we – we – I remember the days, Ross, when we used to make all the binders and put them in the room and then have the reviewers go and sit in that room and just say, "Okay, here's all of our documents. Look at them." I think sometimes what happens when they – when grantees do that and review teams do that is people miss stuff. It's just natural. We don't know your documents as well as you do. You know your documents better than anybody, and so the new process – or the new standardization process really says Avery reviewer who looks at the document needs to look at that document with you. So when they do the child file reviews, the staff file reviews, when they look at your self-assessment, when they look at your community assessment, your board minutes, all of those documents, there needs to be a staff member available and present to kind of guide the way.

The other thing that we're doing is that every night the team will have a review discussion – a team review discussion that talks about your systems. At the – all week long the review team leader will be working with the Head Start director to really understand the systems that your program uses to operate. And at the end of each day, the review team leader will share that information with the rest of the review team so they – so they can make a lot of sense about all of the evidence that they're seeing and all the things that are happening in your program. The more you teach the team leader about your systems the better they reviewers are going to be able to match what they're seeing with – with what's supposed to happen in your program.

We also have a consistent process for reviewing and analyzing the evidence throughout the week. And, our software is used to document and track the variances between that information and to know when we need additional evidence.

Ross: You know, we've – we've talked a lot about the enhancements that are being made and we've – we've, you know, said that a lot of what has – was done in 2012 will continue again in – in 2013. So this is more just a summary, a little bit of what we've talked about in terms of the on-site activities. Again, as Adia's mentioned, there'll be interviews. Interviews with staff will be grouped as much as possible so that the health reviewers would be looking at and talking with the health, nutrition, disability coordinator or coordinators for – with their interviews. Again, Adia gave the example of – when you were talking about you know your files and your systems that you have there, you also know your communities best. We need to understand how your procedures are being implemented to provide quality services for children and families. So again, we want those interviews to be early on in the week on – on Monday.

We'll also, as in previous years, be doing file reviews. Program staff, as Adia mentioned, will be present for each file review to answer questions from the review team as needed. There'll be document reviews, which will be integrated with interviews so that program staff will have the opportunity to discuss the content and use. Again, what we don't want is for reviewers to be making assumptions of how these documents are used, how forms are – are filled out. We want you to explain so we have a clear understanding of that. We also, as we've done in the past, will rely on observations. We'll be – interviews, again, with key staff will take place before the observation so that the review team will be provided with additional context.

So, Adia, do you want to talk a little bit more around the systems piece of it, which the team leader will really be – as we were doing last year, will be looking at the management systems and they'll be using a standardized tool that we've developed this year? And that standardized tool will also have a list of key elements that Adia will talk a little bit about.

Adia: Sure. I am definitely excited to talk about the monitoring systems and really think about how we're going to look at management systems this year. One of the things that many review teams, reviewers, review team leaders, grantees have always heard about over the course of many, many years are systems. We talked a lot about systems and the system services connection. Many people will remember the matrix that we had; lots of different things that we really tried to organize around systems. We looked at lots of data over the course of, I – I guess it would be about two or three years. We looked at tons of data related to how people looked at systems. And what we recognized about what was happening with systems is that most review teams look at systems when there's a violation or an issue in the grantee.

So we will – we will say, "The grantee had 10 playground issues; therefore, they must have a monitoring system problem." And what we've done – we've really done a lot of work to look at the data and focus in on looking at systems without having a violation. It's really important that every review team understand what the grantee's system does. When you do this, we can understand why a grantee has a strength, what's really great about a grantee, and why that's working. And when we understand the systems in totality, when we see a violation or an issue, we can better match and understand what happened in the grantee that may have caused that issue to happen.

So in order for us to make these changes and to make it so that our whole review process is much more systems focused, we have provided every review team with key elements. These key elements help the review team understand, "What should you see in a good system?" If you look on your screen – and I'm not going to go through all of them, but if you look at the 2013 Protocol, which you got in your email box today, you will see that for every system – for all five of the systems that we have, that there are key elements that the review team should look at. I'll use ongoing monitoring for example.

So one of the things that review teams will look for when they look at your ongoing monitoring system is they'll ask you questions about, "What tools do you use for ongoing monitoring?" They'll ask you, "How frequent do you do ongoing monitoring?" because it's a lot different to look at something once a month or once every six months and look at something once a week or daily. They'll ask you, "What staff are responsible for ongoing monitoring?" They'll ask you how you analyze your data. "How do you use your data?" And they'll also ask you whether or not you monitor your delegate agencies if you have those. The review team will look at all of those elements about your ongoing monitoring system and try to determine if all of those pieces are there, whether or not your system is actually functioning properly. So, take some time, look at the new 2013 Protocol, and really get an idea of what all of those elements are.

Ross: And, you know, I want to re-emphasize a point that you made. We need to understand when we go out and do reviews not just what a grantee – or where a grantee may not be doing something where they'd be out of compliance, but more – most grantees have a great deal that they're doing right, and we need to understand that and learn that from grantees. So systems are important, again, not just to find out what – why something went wrong, but even more importantly, why things are happening correctly within a grantee.

Adia: Yeah. And I've seen some great systems over the years, Ross. I've been down at programs and they have had these awesome monitoring systems or planning systems. They tell me all about their strategic goals, they tell me all the wonderful things they're doing in the Head Start program, and now I just really think we have a good mechanism to capture those things.

Ross: Yes, I agree. I agree. The other piece, and this is more specific – or another enhancement, I should say – and this is more specific to the AIAN programs, which is American Indian/Alaska Native programs – is that we're – at the beginning of each of the tribal reviews, the Tribe will spend the first hour with the team to discuss the cultural aspects of the Tribe – [Cough] excuse me – the language, culture, the communication practices between adults and children, and any other information relevant to the Tribe that they want to share with the review team. This is a formalized time for sharing by the Tribe around tribal culture; it is not the time or – for logistics or review information that will be obtained later in the process. Now, why we're adding that is, when we've done tribal consultations throughout this year and over the last few years, this is one thing that's been raised that we need to do a better understanding – of understanding the tribal culture – the culture of the Tribe that we'll be visiting for the review. So, this is specific to the AIAN programs being reviewed in 2013.

Adia: Okay. I think, Ross – I think other grantees who are on the call will be thinking, "Gosh, I want that too."

Ross: [Laughter] Probably.

Adia: And, you know, I really think that every grantee has an opportunity – every grantee has our entrance meeting and that should be your opportunity, during that 30 minutes or so before we actually dig into doing your – your review, that you actually tell us a lot about your culture, who you are, special nuances that we should know about you as a grantee. The other opportunity that grantees always have is during their planning call with their RTL to tell as much as you possibly can before your review happens. So, we want to make sure that every grantee gets that opportunity; but for tribal grantees, we definitely focused on making sure that we have just one hour that's only about culture and not about anything else.

So, I'm going to tell you a little bit about CLASS. We're still doing CLASS this year. We're – we did a great job with it last year. It was really exciting. Most of our CLASS reviews are – are over now; we started early – we started a little late this year, but this year we'll start right on time. One of the things that I want folks to know is that during the RTL discussions with the program it's critical that the program accurately report information that the team uses to plan CLASS observation. This means that you definitely have to go into HSES and update your classrooms. That is one of the most important things that grantees can do to get ready for their review. The classrooms in HSES, that's the information that we actually use to pull your sample. And when that's not correct, we come on-site and we find out, "Uh-oh, they have 20 more classrooms than we anticipated." [Laughter] And we really don't want that to happen because then we have to redo the – the sample when we get on-site. It's never – never a good thing. So, grantees should really focus on making sure that happens.

Also, some other things that you want to think about as a grantee is, "Do you have new teachers in your program?" So when you get the notification that your review is happening and you have teachers that have been there for less than two weeks, you want to make sure that you let the RTL know that up front so that they can make a change in your sample so that we don't see classrooms where the teacher has only been available for two weeks. And any other special circumstances that you have with your program; if you have languages that are different in your program, that are special, where we will need a different type of CLASS reviewer, please let us know because we like to make all of those adjustments.

Here's a list of things that CLASS – where CLASS observations will not be conducted. We don't do CLASS observations during arrival and departure because we feel like, hey, we don't – they haven't had time to settle in. It's pretty obvious we don't do it during nap time; the kiddos are asleep and we can't really see good interactions. We don't do it during unstructured recess time. We do do it when the teacher has a structured outdoor activity that's actually a part of the lesson, but not during the unstructured portion. When 50 percent of the children who are enrolled in a classroom are not present, we don't think that that's a real – it's not a good opportunity for us to look at the classroom at that time. We also don't do it when there's a new teacher or a new substitute who's been there for less than two weeks or when classrooms are led by individuals other than the primary staff.

So, grantees, we want you to know that we really work hard to make sure that we see your programs at their best. So let us know anything ahead of time, as much as you possibly can, to make sure that we get into your classrooms, we pull the sample that is actually representative of you.

Ross: You know, one of the things that I recall, again from last year, which was my first year on this webcast, was Adia stressing probably on three or four different slides how important it was to enter information into the Head Start Enterprise System so that we can work with programs and – and learn from the review team leaders' discussion with the grantees in terms of how we can build and – and do a review process that's for that particular program. So, that information from both the RTL's discussion and the HSES is used to plan on-site review and compose the review team. It's used to draw samples, as Adia mentioned. We need the information to be accurate. We can't be – it just makes it much more difficult when the information isn't accurate; when there's been changes; or as, again, Adia mentioned, if there's a new teacher or substitute in the classroom. We need to have that information ahead of time. And if there are events or closings that affect a classroom, where we can – can't observe in a classroom.

So, we also need to use that information to coordinate the on-site schedule of activities so that if you're having a meeting or something like that, we're aware of that – review team is aware of it. So again, without taking three or four slides to emphasize it, I want to make sure that people understand getting that information into the Head Start Enterprise System is critical.

Adia: Alright, Ross, well I won't take three or four slides either. I know people know how important it is. I will use this last slide to talk a little bit about deficiencies. We know at the Office of Head Start that deficiencies are something that grantees definitely worry about. And so, the Office of Head Start wants to be as transparent as possible about the common deficiencies that we find in – in Head Start and Early Head Start programs. So in October 2012, we're going to provide all grantees with a list of common deficiencies. These are the deficiencies that we see on-site most often. And we want to provide this to you as training and technical assistance. We really want it to be clear to grantees where the pitfalls are, where people fall into trouble, and what are some of the common deficiencies that you – that we often see and that we often cite in Head Start programs.

So we're going to provide that list in October to all grantees. It'll probably come out as a PI or IM, but it'll be something that is very clear and very transparent for grantees to look at. We also want grantees to know that when we provide those lists that that's not – those aren't the only deficiencies that we can call. When we see areas that are – that are severe or egregious or definitely outside of things that we've never saw before, the Head Start Act has always given us the opportunity to look at substantial and systemic deficiencies. And we'll continue to do that in 2013, but we want to make sure that people really are clear about the things that cause pitfalls for grantees.

Deficiencies also will continue to result from uncorrected non-compliances. So, I hope that all grantees really do take the time when you get your monitoring report to look at the non-compliances and work really hard over the course of the 120 days that you get to correct them, because we don't want to see grantees that actually have elevated deficiencies. It's our goal at the Office of Head Start to make sure that every grantee who has a non-compliance moves forward, corrects that non-compliance, and goes on, you know, without any problems.

Ross: I – I think that also it's important to remind programs that when you receive your report and if there are areas of non-compliance that you engage your regional office in that discussion so that the appropriate training and technical assistance can be provided, but also so that your Regional Office can be a support for you in terms of helping to make sure that the non-compliance is corrected.

Adia: Alright. Well, Ross, now is that time for questions, and I see we've already gotten quite a few that have come in.

Ross: Okay. Well, let me – I'll read the question and then you want to give the answer.

Adia: Well, Ross, I'll read some too. [Laughter]

Ross: But you do the answers so well. You know? The first question came in: "What are some of the best practices when preparing parents and stakeholders for interviews and meetings?" And I think that that is a – a very valid question that many programs have of how do we, again, help parents understand and stakeholders understand what this process is.

Adia: You know, I've been out on lots of monitoring reviews, Ross, and I see people who – they kind of give their parents the Protocol, they have them answer all the questions, and they test them on them to make sure they have the right answers. And we know [Laughter] when that happens. I do think it's a good – it's a good practice to make sure that parents and all your stakeholders are familiar with – with what's going to happen on the review. But, I also think that the best thing to do is to tell your stakeholders to be honest – to really speak freely; to be honest; to, you know, just tell it like it is. I always give them – I always, during my interviews, say to the parents, "Brag about something that you really love about your Head Start program. Tell me about all the things that are wonderful." And then I ask them questions like, "Tell me some things where you could see improvement," because I really want to understand from the parents, hey, what do you know about this Head Start program and how are they really helping you.

The other thing, for boards and for Policy Council, I think a great way to prepare them is to 1) make sure that they're present. I find that a lot of times when I go on reviews, they may have one board member who I need to call on the phone or they have one Policy Council member that just shows up. And that really puts the grantee at a disadvantage because they don't have enough people at the interview that can actually give a broader perspective on how the governance happens in the program. So I really feel that grantees should work with – work with the boards. And we've told all team leaders to not conduct the governance – the governing body interview unless you at least have the core members, meaning the fiscal person, the education person, the legal person, and a parent from the board. We just really think it's important that we get a full perspective of that. But I think, throughout those things, you know, if you're doing a great job with your Head Start program every day, preparing is not really the thing that needs to be on your mind.

Ross: That's right. I would agree. And I would – I would re-emphasize that, that when we are talking about monitoring review, we're really looking at what you do every day. You know, the best way probably to prepare parents and stakeholders in understanding how your program operates is involve them in self-assessments, involve them in planning, make them an active participant in how your program operates. They'll know the answers. They'll understand because the answers aren't what we're – what we've set out, the answers is – are – excuse me – the answer is understanding what your program does on a day-to-day basis.

Adia: I agree.

Ross: Now, second question is very similar, but it has to do with: "What are some of the strategies that grantees can use to prepare for their review?"

Adia: Well, you know, one of the things I think all grantees should do is they should make sure that they have all of their information uploaded to HSES. You know I was going to say that a couple of times; right, Ross? [Laughter] I just feel like grantees are best prepared when they have everything sort of settled and ready to go.

The second thing I think that grantees can do is take advantage of the call with the RTL, with their review team leader. When that review team leader calls you 30 days before your review, take advantage of all the questions that they're going to ask you about when should your interviews occur, who is it that you need to talk to, how you may want to combine interviews. I think it's really important to make sure that every grantee takes advantage of that and uses that opportunity to make sure that the review goes as smoothly as possible.

And then the third thing I think that grantees should do is really – this is a great year to take stock in your agency; to take stock in all the things that you've always done; to look – to dust those plans off that you've been kind of working on over the course of several years and really take a look at them and say, "Do we really know about our program's goals and objectives and where we want to go;" and make sure that all your staff really understands how you plan on operating as an agency and what your agency philosophy is.

Ross: Right. Next question is one that I'll actually ask and then answer.

Adia: Okay.

Ross: Because it's just a simple one. "When will the Monitoring Protocol be available?" Well, it's available now. It was emailed out this morning to all grantees, so you should have it. If you don't, check your email and make sure that it's not buried in among other 100 emails that you've probably received from the day's beginning. The – I think if you have questions around the Protocol then it's – you'll be able – once you see the Protocol, you'll be able to, I think, have answers to the questions that you might currently have.

Adia: Okay. That's an exciting answer. Today. Right in your box.

Ross: Alright. The next one we want to talk about: "Will we have the opportunity to help the on-site review team to understand our documents and our child file system?"

Adia: Not only do you have the opportunity to help, it's actually a part of the standardized methodology that it's required that the review team actually sit with your staff and make sure that they explain to them the documents, the files, everything that you use. So when the review team comes to your program, they have instructions to absolutely have your staff members show them, guide them, walk them through all of your program information.

Ross: Okay. We have a few more questions, and the next one is: "Is there a specific order of events that review teams follow when they come for monitoring review?" Now this is something you've already mentioned, but let's re-emphasize that.

Adia: No problem. There are – there is a specific order of events that review teams follow for the standardized methodology. Of course, circumstances can change things when you hit the ground: a classroom may not be available; observation may not be available; the health coordinator, nutrition coordinator might be sick on Monday, and so they need to make some changes. But generally, the way the schedule works is that we do all the interviews first. After we complete those interviews, in the following days we do observations, file reviews, transportation. So all of those things follow, but the first day really is set aside for interviews. And as a grantee, you want to make sure that you set up as many of those interviews as possible, including your Policy Council and your governing body interview. If we have those accomplished on Monday, again, that definitely tells us a lot about your agency and then we can move forward.

Ross: You know, when we have these webcasts there are some questions that we expect that will be answered – asked and this is – the next one is one that we anticipated would be coming up, and that is: "Do we need school readiness goals for only preschool children or also for children zero to three – the Early Head Start children?" Adia?

Adia: Well, if you remember, a few slides back in my presentation, I said that school readiness is definitely a birth to five event. So you're going to need school readiness goals for all of the children in your program, from the little bitty babies all the way up to those kids who are about to go to kindergarten. So please make sure that you have school readiness goals that address zero to five.

Ross: Next question is: "What is the point of sampling? It seems complicated." Now there are some questions that I anticipate that would be asked, and this is also one of them that I know Adia just loves to answer because she has worked on the sampling piece for a long time. So, Adia?

Adia: Sampling is complicated. There's no doubt that sampling is complicated, but it's the right thing to do. If you – if you have ever – if you've been in the Head Start business for a while, you will remember the days when we came out to grantees and we kind of just picked which classroom we went to or picked which files that we picked. One of the things that – the reason why we use sampling is because we want to make sure that our process for reviewing is valid and is reliable.

We also want to make sure that all the day-to-day we collect about your agency is generalizable. I'll give you an example. If we go to a super grantee and we only see 10 classrooms and then we provide a finding for that grantee, that doesn't really tell you a lot about the entire agency. That sample is not generalizable to the entire population. So, we use sampling so that we come within a 95 percent confidence and a 2.5 percent precision for understanding that when we look at the evidence in your program that it's generalizable to everything that we see. We do it in every agency. It's a standard process for us. And it ensures that when we have a finding in your agency, we know for – for sure – 95 percent sure that that finding is actually the right finding for your agency. So, sampling is really important.

Ross: Okay. Thanks, Adia. This next question, just to give Adia a little bit of time to – to breathe, I'll actually – actually ask and then answer again.

Adia: Okay.

Ross: Sometimes I just get on a roll.

Adia: Oh, I like that.

Ross: "Will CLASS reviewers observe during class schedules when children are usually not in gross motor time or are we expected to revise the daily routine or schedule for that day?" And that answer is no. The grantee should not revise their daily schedule to accommodate CLASS reviewers. That's part of what we look at when we first arrive on site and so on, but you should not be rearranging your schedule for reviewers.

The last few questions that we've received is: "Will you release the PowerPoint presentation used for the webcast?"

Adia: Yes, we will. That's an easy one.

Ross: That is. [Laughter] And actually, I think as I said in the beginning, this will also be rebroadcast or available.

Adia: Yeah. It will be available and I – I think it's going to go up on our learning website so people can get it.

[00:49:25.29]Ross: Here's the next two I expected would questions. So, "Will grantees receive at least a 30-day notice prior to the monitoring review?" We've heard that that's referenced a number of times, but... And the second part – it's two – a separate question but it – we might as well answer them together, and that is: "Will there be unannounced reviews in 2013?"

Adia: Yes there will, Ross. [Laughter] We have – we've – unannounced reviews have actually worked out very well for us. And grantees who have had unannounced reviews have often come up and said, "You know what? It was easier than I thought it was." So, we'll continue to do that in 2013. And when you have an announced review, you'll get a 30-day notice.

Ross: You know, I think for the unannounced reviews, some of the times it's probably more anxiety-producing at the very – when – when you have the review team knock on the door and show up. But quite honestly, those reviews you often get a much better sense of how the program's operating on a day to day basis because there's not been that attempt to, "Oh, they're coming next week; we've got to have everything in tip-top shape." And so, I think that a lot of the program directors do think that it was beneficial just to not – have it unannounced. But as Adia said, there will – there will be – that will only be a certain percent and the rest will be announced with a 30-day heads up.

We have another question: "Will reviewers be looking at electronic documentation?"

[00:51:06.20]Adia: Oh, yeah. You know what? We know that this is 2013 and that folks have lots of electronic systems. We have ChildPlus. We have Promise. We have all those different things. And the reviewers have been instructed to look at your documents the way that you prepare them. So if you keep them in an electronic system like COPA or – or – or ChildPlus, the reviewers will look at all your electronic documents. And you can help them and walk them through those systems so they – that they know what they're seeing.

Ross: Next question is: "In a small program, will sampling be used or will you review each file and each classroom?"

Adia: You know, that's a very interesting question. It really depends. We have what's called "extra small programs." We have small programs. We have medium. We have large. And they all have a different size number. An extra small program can be a program that only has 20 children. And in that program, we actually look at all of the children and all of the files. It's such a small program, that is the sample size that's generalizable to that program. As the programs get bigger, the sample changes. But for really small classroom – really small environments, we generally look at everything.

Ross: The other piece that – that was the last of the questions we have. But the one thing I want to also address is that regardless of your program option, when a review team is on-site, they will be looking at all of the program options that – that your program operates. So it's not just going to be – sometimes there's a sense that, well, we're only going to be looking at center-based because of the CLASS piece. No. We look at every option that you operate, whether it's home-based, whether it's a family child care, or center-based, or other options.

Adia: We got some more questions.

Ross: More questions. Okay. Well, let's see. I guess it's just the last. There's one more question. "Since there is not a CLASS instrument for Early Head Start programs, what will be used for those observations?"

Adia: Very cool question. What we did for the 2013 Monitoring Protocol is that we designed an observation tool that actually works for zero to five. Last year, we had one question; it really wasn't succinct. But this year, what we did was we worked with all the content area experts at the Office of Head Start and we developed a CDE observation tool that actually is a zero-to-five tool and is very specific. Once we interview your CDE coordinator and your staff members, then we actually move into observations that help us understand how you're implementing the Child Outcomes Framework and whether or not those five domains – those five domains are actually being implemented in the classroom. So if you – when you get the new Protocol, you'll be able to see some of the questions that we ask in some of the observation tool.

Ross: Okay. Well, that's the end of the questions that we've had. So at this point we'll wrap up, and I want to...

Adia: We will. I just want to correct something. I think that the tool – the actual observation tool may not be in the Protocol, but the questions are actually there. So, I don't want grantees to get confused looking at the document thinking there's a tool there that's not.

Ross: Okay. Good. Thank you. So, we want to thank each of you for taking the opportunity to be part of this webcast. We know that Head Start programs are serving and working with the most vulnerable children and families in the country, and a lot of what you do is things that often go unnoticed. And we – we understand that it's – it's hard to operate a Head Start program, but we also understand there are very – that there are a lot of quality Head Start programs out there. And our review, as we've said throughout this webcast, is to really find out and learn about how you're doing reviews and how your program operates so that we can have a fair assessment of your program.

So I want to thank Adia, also. She's a tremendous sidekick. She keeps me in line when – when I start to go astray. So, I thank you for – for doing that again today.

Adia: No problem, Ross.

Ross: So with that, thank you and goodbye.