



News > Local

Stimulus funding restores Head Start programs

[Print Page](#)

By Joy Campbell, Messenger-Inquirer

Published: Friday, November 13, 2009 1:01 AM CST

Audubon and East View elementary schools will have their Head Start preschools restored starting in January.

Audubon Area Community Services has received \$1.69 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (stimulus funds) for Head Start expansion over its 16-county service area.

The funds will pay for 81 preschool slots -- 17 each at Audubon and East View for a total of 34 in Daviess County.

AACS cut the two Head Start programs attached to Daviess County Public Schools last year to adjust to its reduced federal budget allocations.

"The programs are just like our other Head Start programs," said Aubrey Nehring, Head Start director for AACS. "The main difference is that these are funded with stimulus dollars, so there is a time limitation on them."

The programs will be funded for two years, with \$867,000 allocated the first year and \$826,200 in year two.

Nehring said the funding is not broken out by county or by center. The budget includes startup costs, management and support staff (off site) as well as on-site field staff, he said.

AACS will add 25 jobs across its service area with the stimulus funds, with another 29 jobs created indirectly, Nehring said.

In Daviess County, five staff jobs will be created.

"This will allow us to reach more 3-year-olds," said Tom Shelton, superintendent of Daviess County Public Schools. "When we get an opportunity to get kids earlier, they are that much more prepared for kindergarten."

The 3-year-old Head Start program works well with the district's 4-year-old preschool program, he said.

DCPS does a kindergarten assessment at the start of school to see how well students do at such things as recognizing their colors and shapes.

"We've discovered that a child coming from a preschool does better than those who don't get that experience ... Head Start reduces the gap," Shelton said.

Head Start applications for Audubon and East View already are being accepted.

The programs will run from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and parents must provide transportation.

Both Nehring and Shelton said they are hopeful that the programs will be funded beyond the second year if the economy shows enough improvement.

AACS must send monthly enrollment reports to the federal government as well as an end of the year enrollment report.

Joy Campbell, 691-7299, jcampbell@messenger-inquirer.com

Applications are being accepted for Head Start at Audubon and East View elementary schools starting in January. Children must be 3 years old as of Oct. 1, 2009, to be eligible for the program, and they must meet Head Start's income guidelines.

The programs will run from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and parents must provide transportation.

For more information, including income guidelines, call Sandra Self at 314-5792.

Copyright © 2009 - Messenger Inquirer

[x] Close Window