



The Black Belt Bulletin

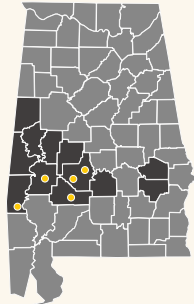
ISSUE 42 | AUGUST 26, 2024 | BACK TO SCHOOL



FACTS & FIGURES

– BBCF HEAD START –

Since 2017, the Black Belt Community Foundation has operated **five** Head Start programs, for children ages 3-5, located in **four** Black Belt counties (Choctaw, Dallas, Marengo and Wilcox) serving **307** children annually. With a budget of **\$4 million** dollars and a staff of over **70 personnel**, BBCF Head Start is one of the premiere early childhood educational programs in the state.



Dr. Taquila Monroe, BBCF Head Start Executive Director, serves as President of the Alabama Chapter of the National Head Start Association.

BBCF Head Start joins the rank of only 24 other grant recipients who were accredited with a **Program of Excellence distinction**. BBCF Head Start is the only program in the State of Alabama to have this accreditation.

OFFICE OF HEAD START - FACTS & FIGURES

- Administrated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Established in 1964 by President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty"
- Initially organized by Sargent Shriver, the first president of the Office for Economic Opportunity
- For pre-school age children from low-income families
- Comprehensive program to meet emotional, social, health, nutritional, and educational needs
- Over 1,600 Head Start/Early Head Start programs/grant recipients
- 1 million children served
- 275,000 staff
- National Head Start Association founded in 1974 to work for policy changes that ensure all income-eligible children have access to the Head Start model



BBCF Head Start Goes 'Back To School' as a Program of Excellence



Monday, August 12, 2024, marked the much anticipated first day of school for BBCF operated Head Start programs in four Black Belt counties (Dallas, Choctaw, Marengo, and Wilcox). Each campus was abuzz with students and their families, being greeted by an array of teachers, support staff, and Head Start administration.

Prior to this joyous first day of school, Head Start staff completed two weeks of 'Pre-Service' training, July 29 - August 9, to better prepare them for the rigorous year ahead. Teachers and staff received training on a number of topics including changes and transitions with assessment software, mental well-being and psychological safety, and fatherhood training via AMEN (A Man Everyone Needs). In addition to the Pre-Service training, one of Head Start's requirements is to conduct parent orientation sessions for new and returning parents. During the orientation sessions, information about the program, its goals, the curriculum, and expectations of parents is shared. Also, this is an opportunity to build trust with our parents. The BBCF Head Start Leadership Team, and the Family Advocates conducted six parent orientation sessions at five centers within four counties over three days.



Judith Hardy, Family Services Coordinator, speaks with parents at an orientation session prior to the start of school.

The new school year also marked a milestone in enrollment. "BBCF Head Start is opening the school year with the number of students (307) we are funded for and required to serve by the federal Head Start program", according to Judith Hardy, Head Start Family Services Coordinator.



Yet another milestone was achieved when Head Start Executive Director, Dr. Taquila Monroe announced the newly awarded Program of Excellence distinction, and 5-year accreditation earned from the National Head Start Association (NHSA). "The NHSA's mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education. NHSA led a rigorous peer review of BBCF Head Start's educational program, data-driven outcomes, parent engagement, and family services and programs", according to Monroe. "We are proud to be one of the twenty-four Head Start Programs of Excellence in the United States, and the only one in the entire state of Alabama," stated BBCF CEO & President Felecia Lucky.

PoE 2024 - 2029

Of over 1,600 Head Start/Early Head Start recipients, BBCF Head Start joins the rank of only 24 other grant recipients who were accredited with a Program of Excellence distinction, AND BBCF Head Start is the only program in the State of Alabama to have this accreditation. We are pleased to report that Black Belt Community Foundation has been accredited as a Program of Excellence for five years.



Sources: acf.hhs.gov/ohs; eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/head-start-timeline