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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Head Start and Early Head Start Programs of the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency received notification from the Administration for Children and Families that our programs have been awarded an additional \$1.6 million. The funding will be used to increase hours of service for 118 Head Start preschool children in six full-year classrooms in Salem. The expansion for Early Head Start will provide services to 32 additional infants and toddlers in classrooms in Dallas, Independence, West Salem and Keizer, and the expansion for Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships will provide services to 20 additional infants and toddlers through contracts with family child care providers in Marion and Polk Counties.

Start-up funds were also awarded to purchase additional buses and materials for new classrooms. These grants include additional funding from the Office of Head Start to pave the access road at our Middle Grove facility, along with additional resources to pave the adjacent parking lots and install sufficient lighting, speed bumps, and striping for the parking areas. Total start-up funds will be a one-time amount of \$1,050,721.

The Head Start Program includes Head Start preschool programs, which serve 3- and 4-year-old children, and Early Head Start programs for infants and toddlers, and their parents. Services are delivered nationwide, as part of a 1,600 agency network that administer the federal program in consideration of the unique local needs of families. Head Start programs prepare vulnerable young children across America to succeed in school and in life beyond. Its programs deliver services to children and families in vital core areas of early learning, health, and family well-being, while engaging parents as learning partners in their children's early education.

Eva Pignotti, Head Start and Early Head Start Program Director at Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency, comments on the funding increase:

Receiving the Federal funding to grow and enhance our programs in these ways will provide much needed infant and toddler care in our service area. Our work with child care providers to deliver Early Head Start services enhances the education, environment and quality of child care for our youngest children. The duration model will provide 1,020 hours of preschool to 118 children with classes running through the summers. This will help children be even better prepared to enter kindergarten with no 'summer drift', when children can tend to lose ground on their development and skills because of being out of school for the summer.

We are so honored and pleased to be the custodians of this new funding and excited to work with our children, parents, staff, and community partners to maximize the anticipated outcomes.