

# Migrant and Seasonal Head Start

Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)

## OVERVIEW

The Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program provides child care and a comprehensive program of health, parent involvement, and social services for preschool children of low-income migrant and seasonal farm workers. There are four areas of service offered:

- Child Development Program
- Family and Community Partnerships
- Health Services, including medical, dental, nutrition screening, and immunizations
- Special Services for children with disabilities

In Illinois, services are typically provided as a full-day program on a short-term basis during the farming season. The operating season for this program varies by area, but is typically just a few months between April and October.

## WHO IS SERVED?

### *Population(s)/Age Group:*

The young children (6 weeks to 6 years old) of migrant or seasonal farmworkers in Illinois.

### *Eligibility Criteria and Screening Tools:*

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start providers services to children from six weeks to six years old whose parents meet the federal definition of "migrant" or "seasonal"; generally farmworkers who travel from place to place seeking agricultural work. Families must have income less than the Federal Poverty Level.

Children within the MSHS program receive developmental screening per Head Start program requirements, typically using the Denver tool.

## HOW ARE SERVICES DELIVERED?

### *Local Service System:*

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start sites are located in areas of the state with known populations of migrant or seasonal farmworkers with children under the age of 6. The specific areas of the state with a MSHS program can vary from year to year. IDHS and its delegate agencies conduct ongoing community assessments to determine where the program is needed. When needed, IDHS staff goes to areas of the state to investigate reports of migrant workers in regions, which are outside delegate recruitment areas.

In 2014, MSHS programs were located in: Cobden, Oswego, East St. Louis, Kankakee, Centralia, Olney, Princeville, Rantoul, and Sheldon.

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## *Referrals into Program:*

Families may be referred to Migrant and Seasonal Head Start program through multiple sources, including employers, caseworkers, health clinics, churches, and other community based organizations in contact with migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

Staff from delegate agencies actively canvass the full recruitment area by talking to all growers, driving to migrant housing (scattered or camps), investigating all referrals from families, public and private agencies, and other sources.

## *Data Systems Used:*

COPA, Galileo, PIR

## **STATE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR OR CONTACT**

Molly Joseph-Parker  
Office of Migrant and Seasonal Head Start  
Illinois Department of Human Services  
Molly.Joseph-Parker@illinois.gov  
(217) 524-6318