



## **News Release**

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### **City Receives Grant for Head Start Program**

**ROCKFORD, Ill.** – The City of Rockford today announced that it received funding in the amount of \$6.5 million annually to provide Head Start and Early Head Start services in Winnebago County for the next five years. Head Start is a federally funded program that promotes school readiness for children from birth to age five and pregnant women who meet income guidelines.

With this new grant, an enhanced partnership with Rockford School District will reach more children ages 3 to 5 years old in public schools. Previously, the Head Start program was available at Dennis Early Education Center. Beginning this year, the program will also be run at Beyer and Summerdale. There will be six full-day classrooms and 10 part-day classrooms co-taught by teachers from RPS and Head Start, which are replacing Head Start preschool classes formerly offered at Fairgrounds and Orton Keyes housing developments.

“By strengthening our partnership with Rockford Public Schools, we are able to provide students with one point of entry that is really mutually beneficial for both organizations,” explains George Davis, Executive Director of the City’s Human Services Department. “We are also increasing the number of full-day classrooms, which helps best prepare children for kindergarten.”

The Early Head Start Program for children ages 0 to 3 and pregnant women will also be seeing changes. The program is expanding its capacity from serving 92 to 146. While most children and their families are seen in their homes, a new center will be developed at the Fairgrounds Valley public housing project, where Head Start previously provided part-day preschool. The Parent and Child Education Center will care for children whose

parents are training for a job, working on a GED or attending an educational program. The center should open in January 2019.

Services will continue with a variety of other partners, including the YMCA, Hand N Hand Child Care Center, Rockford Day Nursery and Trinity Day Care.

For more information on Head Start enrollment, call the City of Rockford at 779-348-7169 .

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