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Delay in Compliance Date for Background Checks and QRIS

The Office of Head Start (OHS) has further **delayed the compliance date** by two years for the comprehensive background check procedures and for programs to participate in their state or local Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS). Programs have until Sept. 30, 2021 to comply with the comprehensive background check procedures as required in **45 CFR §1302.90(b)**. Until then, programs are required to meet the background check requirements in **Section 648A** of the Head Start Act that requires them to obtain a state, tribal, or federal criminal record check for all staff members prior to employment. Programs also have until Sept. 30, 2021 to participate in their state or local QRIS as required in **45 CFR §1302.53(b)(2)** of the Head Start Program Performance Standards final rule.

OHS understands Head Start programs would bear unintended regulatory and administrative burden if they attempt to comply with the comprehensive background check standards without support from local and state law enforcement agencies. Furthermore, discussions with Head Start grantees and state organizations indicate concerns about the time and resources needed by both the states and grantees to ensure Head Start grantees are able to participate in their QRIS. For these reasons, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services previously delayed the compliance dates for these standards through notices in the Federal Register.

OHS is also seeking feedback from the public by Dec. 26, 2019 to gain more information regarding attempts made to become compliant with the comprehensive background check requirements. The Federal Register notice announcing this change with the full rationale can be found at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/11/26/2019-25634/head-start-program>.

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