

LAC

A Limited-Scope Review of the GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission

May 1999



The GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission is a public agency created by the General Assembly in 1976. GLEAMNS is responsible for implementing programs designed to improve the health, education, welfare, housing, and employment opportunities of economically disadvantaged persons in its service area. The agency's service area includes the counties of Greenwood, Laurens, Edgefield, Abbeville, McCormick, Newberry, and Saluda (GLEAMNS). In these counties and in Fairfield, Lexington, and Richland counties, GLEAMNS operates Head Start programs.

Members of the General Assembly who requested this audit were concerned about the expenditure of grant funds by the agency, the use of boards that work with the Head Start program, and the selection of members of the governing board of GLEAMNS. We examined these and other areas identified in our preliminary fieldwork. We made recommendations concerning grant administration, the management of agency personnel, and the selection and terms of members of the GLEAMNS Board of Commissioners.

GRANT ADMINISTRATION

Head Start Funds

In FY 97-98, the budget for the GLEAMNS' Head Start program was over \$7 million. To determine if GLEAMNS had expended Head Start funds according to guidelines, we reviewed 48 vouchers paid from April 1997 to September 1998. We found no material problems with these expenditures. However, without prior approval or proper documentation, GLEAMNS has routinely paid a vendor, who contracts to provide janitorial services in four of the Head Start centers, for services other than those contracted. This business was paid \$112,500 (43% of total payments of \$258,935) for services not authorized by contract.

Type of Service	FY 96-97	FY 97-98	FY 98-99 ¹	TOTAL
Contracted Janitorial	\$41,275	\$62,215	\$42,945	\$146,435
Other	\$23,550	\$53,058	\$35,892	\$112,500
TOTAL	\$64,825	\$115,273	\$78,837	\$258,935

1 Payments through November 23, 1998.

In reviewing requests for payments, we found no evidence that an hourly rate had been established for this business. In addition, the invoices submitted by the business did not indicate the number of hours required to complete the work. Also, in some cases, we found no evidence that agency personnel approved the work before it began.

Head Start Policy Council

The Head Start policy council is required to participate with the GLEAMNS' governing board and GLEAMNS key agency staff on decisions concerning the Head Start program. We found that input from the policy council has sometimes been disregarded or not allowed on decisions requiring its approval. For example, although the council must approve the hiring of Head Start employees, in July 1996, a freeze on hiring employees, including those working with Head Start, was implemented without policy council approval.

CSBG Funds

We found no evidence that GLEAMNS used community service block grant (CSBG) funds for purposes other than those authorized. CSBG funds are typically used to provide direct assistance such as food, rent, and utility costs to persons who meet income eligibility guidelines.

This document summarizes our full report, *A Limited-Scope Review of the GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission*. A full report of this and all LAC audits is available free of charge. Audit reports and agency information are also published on the Internet at www.state.sc.us/sclac. If you have questions, contact George L. Schroeder, Director.

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Employee Grievances

Because GLEAMNS has not handled employee grievances according to its policy, the agency may be vulnerable when employees seek resolution through the legal system. In one case, the former chairman of the GLEAMNS board participated in a grievance which accused both him and the GLEAMNS' executive director of harassment. According to agency records, the chairman participated in discussions about this grievance at a board meeting held prior to the employee appearing before the board. The board did not hear the employee's grievance, and the employee sought relief outside of the agency.

Also, no agency staff at GLEAMNS has been assigned responsibility for coordinating actions on grievances. GLEAMNS staff did not know the status of 20 (47%) of 43 grievances; in 5 of these cases, staff also did not know the nature of the grievance.

Staff Qualifications

We found no evidence that 16 (59%) of 27 employees hired by GLEAMNS met minimum training and experience requirements for the positions they held. For example, the individual hired as the Head Start director had no experience in administering early childhood education or early childhood development programs, as required.

Performance Evaluations

Our review indicated that 126 (67%) of 187 required performance evaluations in our sample were not completed. In addition, 13 of 20 employees hired since 1993 were not evaluated 90 days after they were hired.

Employee Salary Decreases

One of our audit objectives was to determine why the annual salaries of 11 Head Start employees at GLEAMNS were reduced in May 1998. The employees, who received decreases ranging from \$1,352 to \$16,619, were generally assigned to other positions with less pay. Although one primary reason for the decreases was the results of a wage comparability study, we found no evidence that the GLEAMNS' board approved this study or the decreases prior to the decreases taking effect in May 1998. The board had still not approved the study as of December 1998.

Employee Salary Decreases

Former Job Title	Current Job Title	Amount of Decrease
Assistant Mental Health Coordinator	Center Coordinator ¹	\$1,352
Assistant Parent Involvement/Social Services Coordinator	Case Manager/ Center Coordinator	\$1,955
Assistant Health Coordinator	Case Manager	\$3,286
Cognitive Manager	Center Coordinator	\$3,453
Children Services Manager	Center Coordinator	\$3,474
Assistant Mental Health Coordinator	Case Manager	\$3,557
Health Coordinator	Case Manager ²	\$6,448
Team Leader	Case Manager	\$7,238
Assistant Mental Health Coordinator	Case Manager	\$7,238
Assistant Parent Involvement/Social Services Coordinator	Case Manager	\$7,238
Administrative Manager of Compliance	Center Coordinator	\$16,619

- 1 This employee's salary was restored as a result of a grievance.
- 2 This title change occurred over five years ago but there was no salary adjustment at that time.

BOARD ISSUES

Selection Process

One-third of the members of the GLEAMNS' board must represent the poor sector of the agency's service area. The board has not developed guidelines to select these members. We reviewed documentation of meetings held to elect members to represent the poor sector and found several problems. For example, some of the persons listed as attending the meetings told us that they did not attend those meetings.

Terms of Office

GLEAMNS bylaws regarding the terms of board members who represent the poor and private sectors are contrary to state law. We found that ten persons have served on the board beyond the period allowed by law. The decisions of these persons may be challenged.

Board Member's Appointment

We concluded that the selection of the current board member, a black male who represents the private sector of Laurens County, was made in accordance with GLEAMNS bylaws. It was alleged that a white male with the same first and last name was instead appointed to the board by the Laurens County Chamber of Commerce in late 1995.