

Kodiak Head Start Feels Small Sequestration Impact

Wednesday, 04 September 2013

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/130904.head_start.mp3{/audio}

Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Federal sequestration has left many programs scrambling for funds, or making significant cut backs to services already offered. One of the most recent examples of this is the national Head Start program, which helps ready young children for school and provides assistance to low income families. Sequestration cut the program across the board by 5.3 percent this year. This has affected communities across the nation, including Kodiak, where 52 families and children are currently utilizing the program.

Kim Salomon is the on site coordinator for Kodiak Head Start and said the program's start date has been moved to September 11.

"Which is later than normal. My staff was delayed starting as well, because of budget cuts. Normally we do 128 days with children, and that has been cut to 121."

The delayed start isn't quite as bad as other Alaska communities. The program in Petersburg and other parts of Southeast Alaska will start three weeks late.

"We've taken a hit for sure but not as badly as it could have been, thankfully."

Salomon said there is always a potential for future cuts when dealing with federal funding, but for now programs across the state are making due with the information and funding they have.

"Our Anchorage office, Rural CAP, is the one that everybody falls under for, like our Head Start for example, Ketchikan, Kake, and on down the line. Rural CAP has, they have a hold on the situation and is doing everything they can. So we'll just have to wait and see."

As far as service goes, Salomon said she isn't worried about the budget cuts affecting what will be offered for families and children throughout the year.

"Luckily we've got extremely dedicated people that give it their all and go above and beyond and so no, in that regard it won't and we've kind of looked ahead as well as a program, knowing that this was a problem. So I think we're as set up as well as we can be at this point."

Salomon added that the program is still accepting applications from families interested in the program.