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kids and families deserve,” Law said.

The NHA will have the month of January for licensing, hiring and other things necessary to get the program running under its management. Interim operator Community Development Institute, Inc., (CDI) will continue to provide education and services until the first week of February, according to Kenneth J. Wolfe, deputy director for the Office of Public Affairs within ACF.

Law said the NHA will operate Head Start at its current locations of Nathaniel Ely School and Ben Franklin Center, which both are in South Norwalk.

In a cover letter to Law, Louise Eldridge, Regional Program Manager for the ACF Office of Head Start, outlined instructions for obtaining the grant money from the federal department.

“We wish you success in your program,” Eldridge concluded. According to the accompanying Notice of Financial Award, the NHA so far will receive \$731,350 to run Head Start for the budget period Jan. 1, 2014, through Dec. 31, 2014. The “Project Period” is listed as Jan. 1, 2014, through Dec. 31, 2018. “The project period is for five years, but we fund on an annual basis as Congress appropriates yearly funding,” Wolfe said. “The annual amount for this grant is \$1.462 million. The \$ 731,350 is 50 percent of the annual amount because the federal government is still on a continuing resolution. We are funding all January 1 grantees at 50 percent, and will fund the remaining amount once we have a final appropriation for 2014 which happens next month.” The NHA must comply with terms and conditions for the five- year period. Those terms and conditions address, among other things, health and safety, governance and leadership, participation in a school- readiness progress meeting with the Office of Head Start, and attending an “audit webinar.” The local Head Start program had been operated by Norwalk Economic Opportunity Now, Inc., (NEON) the city’s antipoverty agency, until late October. On Oct. 24, the ACF suspended NEON's Head Start grant in response to management problems at the anti-poverty agency, and assigned operation of the program to CDI, its federally contracted operator of troubled Head Start programs.

Transferring building licenses and other legal requirements, however, resulted in Head Start being closed for roughly six weeks. The program resumed under CDI on Dec. 4 with a capacity for 232 Head Start children — 217 funded by ACF and 15 additional children funded by the state, according to Wolfe.

In August, the NHA applied for a roughly \$ 1.4 million federal grant to run Head Start in Norwalk.

At the time, Law said the NHA had letters of support from Stepping Stones Museum for Children, Literacy Now and Norwalk Community College. The college would perform the training, Stepping Stones would serve in an advisory role, and Literacy Now would provide training for teachers if the grant were awarded, he said at the time.

State Sen. Bob Duff, D25, said he was pleased that the NHA will be running Head Start in the future.

“ I think that they will bring Head Start to a new level and have kids who are enrolled there prepared for kindergarten, so I’m excited about the prospects,” Duff said.