



Engaging Governors to Support Head Start and Early Head Start

NHSA Playbook: February 2021

Governors play a key role in Head Start and Early Head Start success. While their terms come and go, governors can have a lasting impact on how Head Start and Early Head Start are perceived, integrated into state systems, and financially supported.

This Playbook from NHSA and a Genius Team* of state Head Start leaders is your guide to engaging with your Governor to set Head Start up for success. This Playbook is meant to be an interactive guide to share best practices and draw out your expertise.



Playbook Sections:

1. It's Time to Talk to Your Governor!	2
2. Engaging with Your Governor	7
3. Preparing Your Messengers to Advocate with Your Governor	11
4. Governor Advocacy During COVID-19 (or any emergency)	13
5. Messages that Work with Governors	14
6. Your Ask, Your Offer	21
7. Other Advice and Resources	23

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1. It's Time to Talk to Your Governor!

Building on Governors' Involvement in Early Childhood Education

It is important to know the ways that Governors are involved in early childhood education. Each presents an avenue for engagement and an opportunity to ask them to take action on Head Start's behalf.

How they are involved	Suggested actions to support Head Start
<p>Governors often win campaigns (and votes) by talking about the importance of education, investing in children and families, and supporting economic growth and opportunity. Their words and rhetoric have influence. The public actions they take, such as visiting an early childhood program, also make a difference.</p>	<p>Talk more about early childhood education in concrete terms both on the campaign trail (being mindful of your legal limits to engage in political activity) and while in office, including brain science, positive outcomes for children, how it supports families and how it strengthens state and local economies.</p> <p>Mention Head Start specifically and how it helps your state's most vulnerable children and families.</p> <p>Invite your Governor to visit a Head Start program and voice support for federal funding, collaboration, and family support.</p>
<p>Governors develop state budgets that reflect their priorities, including investments in education and public welfare. In fact, an estimated 21% of state budgets go to education and another 22% to public welfare programs.</p>	<p>Expand state funding for child care, pre-K, and other programs that target young children and families.</p> <p>Provide dedicated funding to Head Start and/or Early Head Start programs, as 14 states do already.</p> <p>Develop sources of revenue (e.g. a business tax or set-aside) that are sufficient to meet needs.</p>
<p>Governors oversee state agencies, the implementation of state laws and many federal funding streams, hire key staff, make key appointments, and develop workgroups. How they structure the workings of government and the</p>	<p>Strengthen and provide supplemental funding to your state Head Start Collaboration Office (see pull out box).</p> <p>Coordinate and organize early childhood services and supports to best meet the needs of parents, families, and communities, drawing connections between education, health, and public welfare programs.</p>

people they hire have a big impact on how well children and families are served. They particularly have [broad powers](#) or shared powers with respect to education.

Make sure Head Start is represented on all key early childhood committees (such as [State Advisory Councils on Early Childhood Education and Care](#)).

Hire staff who reflect the diversity (gender, racial, ethnic, etc.) of your state.

Recommend agencies to listen to parents and families when policies are being developed, implemented, and evaluated.

Governors often have to **sign-off on major federal grant applications** in order to submit them (e.g. Preschool Development Grants). Specific to Head Start, states can apply to be an Early Head Start-Child Care (EHS-CC) Partnership grantee.

Submit applications for key federal early childhood funding.

Involve current EHS providers, parents and families as key stakeholders in the application and initiative design process.

Provide states resources to expand the impact of state EHS-CC funding.

At their best, governors can be **key champions** for investing in our most at-risk children and distressed communities. They have the power to sway other lawmakers to their cause.

Talk to state lawmakers to convince them to publicly state their support.

Work with NHSA to expand federal support from Congress.



Our mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

State Head Start Collaboration Offices are a Key Connection to Governors

Every state and territory, as well as the Tribal and Migrant and Seasonal communities, have [Head Start Collaboration Offices](#) funded by the Office of Head Start (and other sources) to help Head Start and Early Head Start programs succeed, including through integration into state and local systems.

Collaboration Directors sit in a wide variety of state agencies or even Governor's offices, but most sit in their state Department of Education.

Among their [top priorities](#):

- Serving on and leading statewide committees, task forces or other
- Supporting partnerships between Head Start programs and public schools, including around Kindergarten transition
- Supporting data efforts with the state
- Promoting QRIS integration and alignment
- Creating linkage between child welfare systems and Head Start

While Collaboration Directors cannot advocate, they can share information and contribute to public-private efforts to strengthen Head Start and Early Head Start.

Q: In which of these areas is your Governor most involved?

The Open Door to Your Governor May Not be Early Childhood Education

You don't have to walk through the early childhood education door to build a connection with a governor. If your governor is not yet taking an active role in early childhood, maybe their priorities are in poverty, community college graduation rates, health, reducing crime, or building a 21st century workforce. Head Start is a comprehensive and versatile program that can help in all of these areas, and you can engage your governor by showing that the Head Start community has a lot to offer.

You can identify your governor's interests and potential entry points in a number of ways:

State of the State Addresses

A good way to understand their top interests is to examine their annual State of the State addresses, which the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO) collects and summarizes [here](#). A more narrow look at their [educational priorities](#) can be found in this collection from the Education Commission of the States.

Family and Professional Interests

Knowing a governor's biography and background is a good way to learn about their personal and professional interests. What was their major in college? Do they have children themselves? What was their first job? Where were they born? Most biographies of governor's are easily accessible on Wikipedia or other such sites. The [National Governors Association](#) has brief bios to get you started. *NHSA can also support you in this area, with detailed biographies we have access to—[email](#) NHSA's Director of State Affairs Kent Mitchell if interested in this information.*

Campaign Websites and Donor Lists

Campaign websites can also be a good source of what issues a governor has promised to prioritize and what messages will resonate with them. Their donors can also offer an indication of who they

will listen to and why.. You can find campaign websites and their policy platforms through a simple Google search. For donors, you can use [Follow the Money](#) to dig into who gave to governors, including what industry sectors.

Pick Up the Phone and Network!

One of the best ways to find a good entry point to a governor is to talk to your network and allies! Maybe a member of your Board has insight or connections. Call someone inside the government that you know or your State Collaboration Director. Talk to a supportive lawmaker who may know the governor well—preferably from the same party.

Talk to their Staff, First

All Governor's are going to have staff with specific portfolios, such as Education or Children and Families. All will also have a Chief of Staff. They are likely going to be your first point of connection to a governor and people who can share more about the governor's interests. You can learn generally about [how Governor's offices are organized](#) on this page. Your Governor's website should have staff information. *If you need support, please [reach out](#) to NHSA.*



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Q: What are the broader priorities of your governor? Which can you use to your advantage and find an entry point?

2. Engaging with Your Governor

You have a number of options to engage with your governor, each of which present pros and cons. At the end of the day, you'll likely want to choose a combination of strategies. The best advocacy efforts have actions that build on one another. By engaging through a layered approach, you show your advocacy strength and power, which *will* get noticed.

Strategy	Pros	Cons
Engagement during a campaign	<p>Gubernatorial campaigns are a good way to get a governor and on record.</p> <p>You could have opportunities to show the reach and scale of Head Start in your state.</p> <p>You can ask them to visit a site, answer a questionnaire, or do a town hall, among other options. These are relatively safe options legally.</p> <p>Campaigns offer a lot of opportunities to engage with other partners and advocate communities.</p>	<p>Be careful of legal issues. Nonprofits cannot support a campaign. Consult an advisor for acceptable boundaries and look at publicly-available guidance, like that from Bolder Advocates.</p> <p>Unless you represent a key voting bloc, a major industry or have other power to wield, you may have trouble getting a candidate's attention.</p> <p>Campaign engagements can be superficial.</p> <p>You may waste time on a losing candidate.</p>
Private Meeting	<p>A private setting can allow for more in-depth and candid dialogue.</p> <p>You also get to control who attends from your side and can assemble a diverse group.</p>	<p>Governors are busy! Getting a private meeting could be difficult. Even if scheduled, you may be passed off last minute to an aide or only get 10 minutes.</p> <p>A Governor may be more blunt in their opposition or lack of support in private. The meeting could fall flat.</p>
Public event (e.g. site visit, town hall)	<p>Gives you an opportunity to help them see the impact of Head Start, especially during a site visit, and for you to involve the children and families of HS/EHS.</p>	<p>A public event is a major undertaking, capacity-wise, from securing a location, to getting enough attendees, etc.</p>

	<p>You can involve more of your advocates and leaders. Their acceptance alone signifies they see value.</p> <p>You can involve the media; governors love media coverage!</p>	<p>You may have different purposes or understandings of the reason and value of the event.</p> <p>Unless you structure it, there would be little/no time for private conversation. Be sure to build that in.</p>
<p>Public pressure campaign (e.g. earned media, social media, rally at the Statehouse, etc.)</p>	<p>In some cases, you will want to lead or join a public pressure campaign targeted to the governor and/or state lawmakers (e.g. expand state pre-K or HS/EHS funding, expand Medicaid, etc.) A supportive governor will want to be part of these efforts. Even a non-supportive governor will need to pay attention and respond.</p>	<p>This engagement is usually highly-indirect, unless your governor is a strong supporter of the cause.</p>
<p>Commission / committee / board work with a Governor in their official capacity</p>	<p>Governor's may chair or lead commissions or committees or boards in their state. Most likely, that work will be delegated, but they may still make appearances. Serving is a great way to give back and build an open door.</p> <p>Each governor has an Appointment's Office (e.g. here is Maryland's).</p>	<p>You will likely have limited time with the governor, themself.</p> <p>Serving on a commission, committee or board involves a very limited number of advocates, maybe just one.</p> <p>Service is not necessarily about your priorities, but shared priorities or even aligned ones.</p>
<p>Seek official or ceremonial recognition</p>	<p>Governors have general powers to recognize program achievements, declare days of recognition, etc.</p> <p>These are relatively easy asks to make of a Governor's office.</p> <p>You will have the opportunity to shape what is being awarded, why, the language used, etc. It can be inspiring to the Head Start Community to be recognized by a governor.</p>	<p>Unless you pair this with an invitation or meeting, you will have no direct contact with your governor. That said, you have the opportunity to build staff relationships.</p>
<p>Involve them in</p>	<p>Involving governors in major award</p>	<p>This may not be a compelling invite to</p>

federal awards announcements, major OHS initiatives in your state, etc.

announcements, initiatives, etc. is an easy way to draw attention to how many federal dollars, jobs and kids/families served, you bring to the state.

a governor, given that it doesn't involve state dollars or state agencies. If you go this route, we recommend finding ways to connect it to the local community, secure an audience and invite media.

Tips Straight from Your Head Start Peers

Your Head Start peers had other advice about how to get connected:

- **Get invited onto stakeholder groups.** Governors and other lawmakers often have these groups to listen, learn and build political and policy support. Even if the topic isn't education or ECE, look to other groups to join based on the background of Head Start staff, allies, or others. It is most important to have a Head Start leader in the room.
- **Lean on your parents.** Remember that Head Start is strong and a leader in parent engagement and advocacy. Lawmakers often look to engage families and parents in policy initiatives. It is a strength you can leverage.
- **Lean into your expertise in poverty, trauma, and other issues.** Head Start is an expert in poverty and the realities of it. Even more politically powerful groups, like the League of Women Voters or others, may not know as much about the harsh realities and day-to-day of poverty like your leaders. This is another strength you can leverage. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma is a focus that has been embraced in many states.
- **Connect your work to careers and jobs.** Some Governors may not have embraced early childhood education, but most, if not all, will have embraced some kind of career focus. Some will have a "Cradle to Career" vision, even if more of the emphasis is on K-12, higher education and job training.
- **Lean into their competitive spirit.** Governor's want to be #1 in many things. They look at high-profile rankings, such as those from the [U.S. News and World](#) report.
- **Help them solve a crisis.** A big part of executive governing is putting out fires. If you can help them address a crisis in child welfare, unemployment or community violence, they will be more likely to list



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Q: What are the engagement opportunities that speak most to your strength and capacity? Can you pull off more than one for a layered effect?

3. Preparing Your Messengers to Advocate with Your Governor

Whichever route you take to influence or connect with a governor, don't overlook the importance of identifying strong messengers, building the confidence and strengthening your advocate base. We are fortunate to be in Head Start, where everyone is an advocate! Still, messenger support, advocate education, and training are critical.

Among the best **messengers** for engaging governors:

Messenger	Power of the Messenger
Current parent	Powerful testimony to showcase direct impact on families.
Alumni	Graduates showcase the life-changing power of HS/EHS.
Seasoned program director	Program directors know the program well, innovate, and steward funds.
Other staff	Front-line staff have stories, passion, and many are parents, as well.
Board chair or member	Leaders who can speak to their own commitment and understanding of child, family, and community impact.
Community partner	To showcase the local nature of HS's model; good options include: a teacher or school administrator, a local child welfare case worker, a pediatrician, a nurse, a business leader, a food bank leader.

Different actions take different levels of **Advocate Preparation**, but as a general rule, allow yourself three months before a major action or event to get prepared and engage your supporters.

As you prepare your advocates, here are some questions you will want to address proactively:

- **Why does state advocacy with a governor matter** given that Head Start is primarily federally-funded?
- **What are the governor's background and interests?** (e.g. school boards, educational backgrounds, personal interests or hobbies, young kids/grandkids, etc.)

You'll also want to explain to advocates:

- What **actions you are suggesting** they take and why.
- The **importance of message unity** in any advocacy effort; even if programs can be large, small, urban, rural, it is key to focus on a unified message all can own and share.
- Recommending they **use a conversational tone and tell their story**; Governors are normal people just like them and moved by stories that illustrate their honest passion and commitment to improving the lives of children and families from at-risk backgrounds.

Finally, help advocates understand that advocacy is a journey. One conversation alone won't achieve a goal, except in the rarest of circumstances. Consistent and concerted efforts are key. Introduce them to their state **Collaboration Director** as a good first step. Help them understand you all may be working with staffers (e.g. a governor's education policy director) before you can reach the governor themselves. Most advocates won't have the time or interest to understand your long-term strategy, but you should have that plan down for yourself and be able to articulate the stepwise progress you are hoping to make, as needed.

Q: Who are your best messengers? Why? What key background do your advocates most need about engaging with their governor?

4. Governor Advocacy During COVID-19 (or any emergency)

With vaccine distribution underway, COVID-19 may end soon, but this period is likely to have a permanent impact on advocacy, accelerating and normalizing the uses of virtual advocacy.

The Genius Team had advice on engaging via Zoom and how it offers opportunities for:

- Book reading
- Virtual site tours
- Picture slideshows, including use of PPE, social distancing, etc.
- Engaging more parents and children, since they don't have to travel

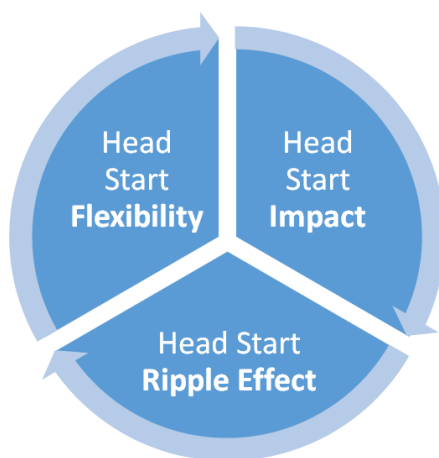
We also know that Governors are now more used to live-streaming and other options that have accelerated during COVID. Get approval first from their communications staff, but you might have the opportunity to live-stream their engagement with your community on Facebook.

Q: How has advocacy changed in your state due to COVID-19? How has your governor responded in new ways to stay in touch with their constituents?

5. Messages that Work with Governors

Message Framework

Your message is one of the most important elements of your work with a governor. In our work at NHSA, we rely heavily on our [Language Playbook](#). In speaking with a governor, you'll want to tailor your message to your state context, current events, and their interests and background, but here is a 3-part message framework:



Head Start's Impact

- HS are local programs that support success in school and in life, serving children from birth to kindergarten.
- HS supports our most at-risk children with essential comprehensive services, giving families an option many need.

Head Start's Ripple Effect

- HS intervenes early to stabilize families and prevent future costs to state governments.
- HS brings critical federal funding into the state.
- HS creates jobs, strengthening families and distressed local economies.

Head Start's Flexibility

- HS is critical infrastructure to help communities respond to and recover from emergencies, whether a pandemic, a flood, or a food crisis.
- HS is always working with states to improve collaboration and partnership.
- HS must stay local (use this message as needed).

Detailed Talking Points

Head Start's Impact

HS are local programs that support success in school and in life, serving children from birth to kindergarten.

<p><i>Why this is important</i></p>	<p>Governors are going to come with very varied backgrounds and thoughts about the importance of early childhood education and family supports. It is important to give them an introduction to Head Start and how it supports both children and families (which differentiates it from most state pre-K and child care).</p>
<p><i>Suggested messages</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Start enrolls the child and the family, taking a whole-child and whole-family approach that addresses kindergarten readiness, health, and family support. • It is the only program in the country that goes prenatal through to kindergarten, serving young children at all ages. • Early childhood care and education is too costly for many families, but Head Start is completely free for income-eligible families who have children living in poverty, experiencing homelessness, or in foster care. • Families give back by being involved in the program, supporting their children and improving their own station in life through health programs, job training and even careers in Head Start. • Head Start has a long record of success!! Across 56 years and over 35 million children served, we have seen that it prepares children for success in school and in life. • Head Start has a positive impact on children's health, social-emotional development and school readiness. • Head Start also strengthens families and even helps to keep families together and prevent involvement with child welfare.
<p><i>Where to get supportive data and facts</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHSA's Head Start Explainers are easy-to-read (and use) explainers of HS and EHS impact. • NHSA's Language Playbook is another key resource.

Breaking the Ice with a Governor

It can be challenging in a first conversation to quickly assess where a governor lies on the knowledge spectrum about early childhood education and Head Start. Here are suggestions from the Genius Team on how to approach a first conversation by asking questions:

- Have you ever visited an early childhood program like Head Start?
- Did you know that Head Start has been serving communities here for 50 years?
- We like to say that Head Start enrolls not just the child, but the family. Are you familiar with how Head Start works with parents?
- How familiar are you with the brain science behind early childhood education?

FYI, Ready Nation offers [Brain Science Speakers](#) for free, that can support your efforts around advancing brain science knowledge.

HS supports our most at-risk children with essential comprehensive services, giving families an option many need.

Why this is important

Make clear to governors how Head Start is an intervention that prioritizes children and families who need more than just child care or pre-K. Head Start’s comprehensive services aren’t just a nice thing to have, they are essential.

Suggested messages

- Head Start is an intervention that provides essential support to children who need school readiness, health supports and social-emotional care. It isn’t something that is “nice” to have in a community, it is a critical program.
- Head Start programs are locally-designed to meet community needs and tailored to families.
- Families need Head Start. For families whose children have disabilities, are coping with trauma or facing other complex needs, Head Start is often the only option.
- Head Start is a diverse and loving community where language, culture, and family traditions are upheld as strengths and integrated into programs.
- Head Start does not give up on any child—Head Start never suspends or expels children, they work to support them, no matter what.

Head Start's Ripple Effect

HS intervenes early to stabilize families and prevent future costs to state governments.

<p><i>Why this is important</i></p>	<p>It is key to educate governors that the things they fund with state dollars, Head Start supports. Every dollar they invest in Head Start (or federal dollars they protect or expand) has an almost immediate return on investment in kindergarten, child welfare, and other areas.</p>
<p><i>Suggested messages</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Head Start is the largest preparatory program for rising kindergarteners in your state and the largest infant and toddler system, too. ● Every HS program partners with schools, whether serving preschoolers with disabilities, partnering to provide pre-K, or helping children transition successfully to kindergarten. ● Head Start students are proven to do better in school, especially when they have the opportunity to attend good elementary schools that align with Head Start's whole-child, whole-family model. ● Because Head Start works with families, it is proven to prevent child welfare interactions and strengthen families. ● Head Start prioritizes supporting families in crisis, including children experiencing homelessness, who desperately need the stability, nutrition, and socialization Head Start offers. ● Head Start is skilled at working with families to address substance use issues, mental health concerns, and other physical and psychological barriers parents face in being the best parent to their child or children. ● Long term, Head Start children are much more likely to graduate from high school, attend college, become taxpayers and lead in their communities.

Head Start brings critical federal funding into the state.

<p><i>Why this is important</i></p>	<p>Governors are going to be unaware of just how large federal HS and EHS grants are coming into their state. And, how no match is required from the state. The numbers of dollars and children served are significant. It is critical to enlist their support to protect these funds and fight for expansion, as well.</p>
<p><i>Suggested messages</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Federal funding for Head Start serves thousands/tens of thousands of children in every state each year, at no cost to the state.

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- There is no state match required, although local programs have to raise 20% of funds.
- The federal investment in HS is [comparable/larger/compares well] to the amount of federal child care funds and what our state spends on pre-K each year.
- It is critical we work together to protect these dollars. We can lose this funding if we don't fight for it in Congress.
- We also have to make sure that Head Start programs are fully-enrolled and don't compete with state-funded slots.

Where to get supportive data and facts

NHSA's [State Fact Sheets](#) are a great resource for the amount of federal funding that comes into your states, jobs created and children served.

Head Start creates jobs, strengthening families and distressed local economies.

Why this is important

Creating jobs and supporting economic growth tends to be job #1 for most governors. It is the thing they care most about. A jobs and economic development message will work well with most, if you can make a compelling case. Keep in mind they deal with major industries and while HS's numbers may be small, every job is value-added. Be sure to stress how HS gives a pathway out of poverty to families and supports distressed communities.

Suggested messages

- Head Start supports thousands of jobs across the state in urban and rural areas.
- Not only does Head Start create jobs, programs buy gas for school buses, food for children, and other goods.
- Teaching and working in Head Start can be a first career step and pathway out of poverty for many women. In fact, many Head Start parents go on to work in the program.
- Head Start is targeted to high-poverty and distressed communities, where it is a vital community support and often a bedrock community agency that families trust.

Head Start's Flexibility

Head Start is critical infrastructure to help communities respond to and recover from emergencies, whether a pandemic, a flood, or a food crisis.

Why this is important

Governors are always facing a crisis, whether a natural disaster (e.g. a hurricane) or a man-made one (e.g. a police shooting). While mayors are key to these responses, Governors have a major role to play in supporting impacted communities, including getting resources and emergency services in place. Head Start is resilient and ready to respond in many ways.

Suggested messages

- Head Start programs are trusted local agencies in every community in the state.
- When a flood, a fire, a hurricane, or a pandemic hits, Head Start is there.
- It is there to support families who have lost their jobs and their homes.
- It is there for children and families who are hungry.
- It is there to help children and families heal from community violence and other kinds of trauma.
- During COVID-19, many HS programs stayed open, added virtual services, did home visits, and expanded their work to feed children and families.
- [The CDC recognized HS](#) for their ability to implement best practice safety features.
- The HS community is a can-do community that will always go the extra mile for vulnerable children and families.

Head Start is always working with states and local communities to improve collaboration and partnership.

Why this is important

Governor's need to be educated about how Head Start works with local and state partners, how it innovates, and how it is committed to changes that strengthen opportunities for children and families.

Suggested messages

- Head Start programs are always assessing local needs and shifting their programming
- Head Start programs are committed to quality and measure their impact on children and families
- Head Start is committed to strong partnerships with child welfare agencies, homeless shelters and food banks



- All Head Start programs partner with public schools to help ensure the gains of Head Start are sustained and children transition well to kindergarten

Head Start must stay local (use this message as needed).

Why this is important

In some cases, you will need to push back directly on block-granting Head Start as a state-run program (like the child care block grant). If raised, be prepared to address it.

Suggested messages

- The power of HS is its local design.
- Being locally-designed, HS is able to ensure that programs meet very specific local needs. If the program ran through states, it would lose that direct connection to communities.
- By getting grants directly, HS programs maximize every federal dollar, making sure that all funding benefits local communities instead of getting trapped in bureaucracies.

Q: What are the elements of this framework and Talking Points that would work best with your governor? How do they fit with your goals? With their interests and goals?

6. Your Ask, Your Offer

It is key to ask governors for their support, but to balance that with offering Head Start's support with issues important to them and to your state—to balance your ask, with your offer.

Your Ask

NHSA has many policy agendas for you to consider as you shape your ask:

- [2021-2022 NHSA Congressional \(and State\) Policy Agenda](#)
- [COVID-19 agenda for states](#)
- [Issue brief on state funding for HS/EHS](#)
- [Issue brief on state collaboration with HS/EHS](#)
- Blog: [5 Ways State Policymakers Can Step Up to Support the Children of Head Start in 2021](#)

Here are some of the common things you might be asking them for:

- State funding for HS/EHS
- More collaboration with pre-K and child care
- More information sharing with families about how to enroll in HS/EHS
- Support for federal priorities and funding
- Support for a certain state bill

Your Offer

Giving back is key to being a good partner to a governor. Here are some of the common supports you may offer:

- Program sites where they can showcase their commitment to children and families
- Committed leaders who are willing to serve on state committees, groups or testify
- Expertise in poverty, child development, family engagement and childhood trauma



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Q: What is your key Ask? What can you Offer to meet their interests and priorities?

7. Other Advice and Resources

Advice from Mandy Sorge

Mandy Sorge was formerly ECE lead with the National Governors Association and is now the Executive Director of the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Department's of Education. Here's her advice:

- Try to reach a governor's Education Policy Advisor or Human Services Advisor (in few instance, their ECE Advisor); in some cases you could go early to their Policy Director
- Research the backgrounds and level of knowledge of both governors and their aides before you talk to them. Some advisors will know a lot, some nothing. Either way, you will be able to walk them through a continuum of HS knowledge and/or ECE knowledge. By asking open ended questions, in the conversation, you will quickly see what they do/do not know.
- Advisors may be hired early if ECE is a top priority but if not, it could be May of the year a Governor takes office before that hire is made

Other Resources

- You can find all of the **National Head Start Association's** [50-state fact sheets](#) on our website.
- **The First Five Years Fund** does [50-state fact sheets](#) that speak well to governors and would serve as a good leave-behind for a meeting with a governor.
- **The National Governors Association** has a number of good resources: a [Pocket Guide to Early Literacy](#); a [Roundtable Report on Integrating and Advancing Prenatal to Age 3 Policies](#), and pieces on [intergenerational poverty](#) (which references HS) and [two-generation solutions](#).
- The **Bipartisan Policy Center** has done important work to map ECE infrastructure in states in [50 State Fact Sheets](#). Here is one [example from Texas](#). These flow charts can help identify key advocacy targets or how Head Start fits into the state landscape.
- The **Education Commission of the States** has a [large number of resources on pre-K](#) that speak well to Governors and state policymakers.
- The **Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes** has a broad range of [state early learning](#) resources that are more policy heavy and data rich. They also have a (now dated) [directory of state ECE contacts](#) (last updated May 2019).
- The **National Conference on State Legislatures** and **ZERO TO THREE** has a good guide on interacting with state lawmakers, more broadly than Governors called, [State Legislators: Who They Are and How to Work with Them, A Guide for Infant-Toddler Professionals](#).



Our mission is to coalesce, inspire, and support the Head Start field as a leader in early childhood development and education.

**Q: Which of these resources is most helpful to your efforts with your Governor?
What other resources might you need to create?**