



August 29, 2025

The Honorable Robert J. Aderholt
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
2362 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

You are probably aware of the important action taken by the Senate Appropriations Committee just before the August recess, to approve, on a bipartisan basis, the Senate version of the FY26 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill. Besides funding for important medical research, drug treatment initiatives, and job training programs, this must-pass legislation provides critical funding for child care and early childhood education, notably Head Start.

We the undersigned, including national, regional, and state Head Start associations, hope you can also reach a bipartisan agreement on Head Start funding – including a modest cost-of-living adjustment – on behalf of the nearly 700,000 children currently enrolled and the thousands more eligible children still waiting for access to this life-altering program benefiting communities in every congressional district.

As you know, Head Start is a multi-generation “whole child, whole family” model that serves as a launchpad to opportunity for children and families, while benefiting the communities it serves. Head Start ensures that all children have a fair chance to succeed in school and life. We serve children from income-eligible families, as well as children in foster care or experiencing homelessness, children with disabilities, children of agricultural workers, and American Indian and Alaska Native children.

Built on community trust and local control, the Head Start model has proven remarkably successful. Research shows that Head Start alumni are more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in and graduate from college, and are less likely to experience poor health, live in poverty, or need public assistance as adults. And Head Start parents and caregivers, having benefited from goal-setting, parenting training, and job training and education, are more likely to join the workforce or stay employed, setting them and their families on a path of economic self-reliance.

Head Start’s ability to support these families, however, is in a state of crisis due to the rising cost of goods and services to programs directly, but also to the Head Start workforce of credentialed teachers, certified kitchen and transportation staff, and professionally trained counselors, many with advanced degrees. **The FY25 Continuing Resolution failed to provide for any cost-of-living adjustment for Head Start teachers and staff, even as economic projections indicate a 3.2% inflationary rate for the current fiscal year, and some projections for FY26 are even higher.**

In April, the National Head Start Association requested Congress provide a cost-of-living adjustment of 3.2%, a \$390 million increase, as many working families – including families employed by Head Start – are struggling to pay for gas, make rent payments, and buy groceries. **This isn’t a handout. It is simply maintaining the basic affordability of life in Haleyville, Alabama, or New Haven, Connecticut, for those toiling in an often thankless and tireless job serving struggling children and families in communities with hard problems.**

As you are probably well aware, the Senate Appropriations Committee included a 0.6% increase to Head Start. While that increase is a step in the right direction, it does not meet the needs of Head Start as outlined above. **With that in mind, we urge you to consider the above request, but, at the very least, to provide no less in FY26 than the Senate level as a clear message of commitment to Head Start's proven, locally-led model of reaching and serving those in deepest need in our communities.**

From all of us, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Yasmina S. Vinci
Executive Director
National Head Start Association



Andrea Pesina
President
National Indian Head Start
Directors Association



Cleo Rodríguez, Jr.
Executive Director
National Migrant and Seasonal
Head Start Association

Regional Head Start Associations

New England Head Start Association
Region II Head Start Association
Region III Head Start Association
Region IV Head Start Association

Region V Head Start Association
Region VI Head Start Association
Region VII Head Start Association
Region VIII Head Start Association

Region 9 Head Start Association
Region X Head Start Association

State Head Start Associations

Alabama Head Start Association
Alaska Head Start Association
Arizona Head Start Association
Arkansas Head Start Association
Colorado Head Start Association
Connecticut Head Start Association
Delaware Head Start Association
District of Columbia Head Start
Association
Florida Head Start Association
Georgia Head Start Association
Head Start Association of Hawaii
and Outer Pacific
Head Start California
Idaho Head Start Association
Illinois Head Start Association
Indiana Head Start Association
Iowa Head Start Association
Kansas Head Start Association
Kentucky Head Start Association

Louisiana Head Start Association
Maine Head Start Directors
Association
Maryland Head Start Association
Massachusetts Head Start
Association
Michigan Head Start Association
Minnesota Head Start Association
Mississippi Head Start Association
Missouri Head Start Association
Montana Head Start Association
Nebraska Head Start Association
Nevada Head Start Association
New Jersey Head Start Association
New Mexico Head Start Association
New York State Head Start
Association
North Carolina Head Start
Association
North Dakota Head Start Association

Ohio Head Start Association, Inc.
Oklahoma Head Start Association
Oregon Head Start Association
Pennsylvania Head Start Association
Rhode Island Head Start Association
South Carolina State Head Start
Association
South Dakota Head Start Association
Tennessee Head Start Association
Texas Head Start Association
Utah Head Start Association
Vermont Head Start Association
Virginia Head Start Association
Washington State Association
and ECEAP
West Virginia Head Start Association
Wisconsin Head Start Association
Wyoming Head Start Association

cc: All Members, U.S. House of Representatives