

November 13, 2025

Dr. Laurie Todd-Smith
Acting Director, Office of Head Start
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Dear Acting Director Dr. Todd-Smith,

On behalf of 21 State and Regional Head Start Associations, we write to ask for your support for Head Start programs impacted by this historically long government shutdown. Among our membership, we represent 77 October and November grantees. 13 of them are currently partially or entirely closed. We know that the Office of Head Start is working quickly to release funds as quickly as possible to the over 140 October and November Head Start grantees who have not yet received federal funds. We understand and respect that it will take your team some time to work through this and get grants out as quickly as they are able.

While your team works through these grants, we are asking you to share with grantees now that their Notice of Award (NOA) will be backdated to the anticipated start of their grant, either October 1 or November 1, 2025. Programs that have been able to maintain operations during the shutdown, using non-federal funds, will be able to more confidently spend down every dollar available to them to minimize program disruptions until their funds arrive if they know that they will receive retroactive funding to the start of their grant period. Programs that are currently partially or completely closed may be able to reopen sooner using any available funds knowing that those funds will be reimbursed when they receive their NOA. Additionally, we ask that the Office of Head Start waive the Congressional hold period on all NOAs to get them released as quickly as possible.

We understand that this is a difficult time for the Office of Head Start as it is for our Head Start Associations and Head Start programs. Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have further questions or require clarification, please contact Michelle Haimowitz at mhaimowitz@massheadstart.org.

Sincerely,

Arizona Head Start Association
Florida Head Start Association
Head Start California
Head Start WEST
Idaho Head Start Association

Illinois Head Start Association
Indiana Head Start Association
Kansas Head Start Association
Massachusetts Head Start Association
Michigan Head Start Association
Missouri Head Start Association
Montana Head Start Association
Ohio Head Start Association
Oregon Head Start Association
Pennsylvania Head Start Association
Region 9 Head Start Association
Region VII Head Start Association
Virginia Head Start Association
Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP
West Virginia Head Start Association, Inc.
Wisconsin Head Start Association