

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

DATE, 2026

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you consider Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations, we urge you to provide robust funding for Head Start at the highest level the Subcommittee deems possible. Head Start provides critical support for our nation's most vulnerable children and families, working to lift them out of poverty and give them the opportunity to be independent, free from reliance on government programs.

Head Start offers services to children from at-risk backgrounds – those living in poverty, in foster care, or experiencing homelessness – as well as family, employment, and educational support, benefitting children, families, communities, and our nation in a multitude of ways:

- **Head Start helps parents work, not rely on welfare**, because providing safe, reliable early education for children gives their parents the opportunity to work, train, or serve in the military, reducing reliance on public assistance and strengthening family economic independence.
- **Head Start strengthens families** because each program is locally run by community nonprofits, schools, and faith-based organizations – not Washington bureaucrats – who, working closely with parents, decide how programs operate, based on local needs and parent preferences.
- **Head Start rewards responsibility, not entitlement**, because families must meet eligibility rules and actively participate in their child's education, and the program emphasizes parent preference and involvement, program accountability, and measurable outcomes, not handouts.
- **Head Start prepares American kids to compete and win** because improving school readiness ensures children go to kindergarten with strong literacy skills – ready to read and write, better able to communicate with others, and with a strong sense of curiosity and love of learning, which ultimately builds a stronger future workforce.
- **Head Start supports rural communities, small towns, and working-class families** because, by disproportionately serving families in those areas that often lack other early education and childcare options, they are empowered to thrive and contribute to their communities.

Head Start programs can be found in every congressional district and, in some communities, are the only early learning options available. Knowing that each community has different strengths, resources, and challenges, and reflecting the federal-to-local funding of Head Start, each program is locally designed to reflect individual community needs and priorities, determined primarily by parents.

Head Start serves as a lifeline to connect families to the resources they need while also supporting quality child development. In 2025, Head Start served nearly 700,000 children and their families nationwide. During the year, Head Start conducted over 3.5 million visits to families in their homes, helped over 673,000 children stay up to date on early and periodic diagnostic treatments, ensured that more than 566,000 children received preventative dental care, and involved more than 201,000 fathers in their children's educational experiences. Children who attend Head Start are more likely to have healthy eating patterns, complete high school, enroll in and graduate from college, and be gainfully employed. And they are less likely to smoke or experience poor health, be arrested or incarcerated, continue to live in poverty, or need public assistance as adults. We collectively commend the successful outcomes of this valuable program.

While difficult funding decisions lie ahead, members on both sides of the political aisle have long agreed that investing in Head Start to provide high-quality early learning and support for our nation's underserved children and their families is a fiscally responsible course of action. Indeed, economic research has shown that high-quality early childhood programs, like Head Start, generate an annual return on investment of more than 13%. And Head Start parents and caregivers, having benefited from goal setting, parenting training, and experiencing real engagement, are more likely to join the workforce or stay employed, setting them and their families on a path of economic self-reliance.

Head Start is not a big-government experiment. Rather, it's a pro-work, pro-family, locally driven program that helps American children succeed and parents stay employed and thrive. And, unlike some federal programs, Head Start's oversight and annual audits hold it accountable for every dollar it receives. Supporting Head Start means investing early so the government doesn't have to step in later, putting children and their families on the path to success in school, in work, and in life, ultimately leading to greater prosperity for future generations of Americans.

As you evaluate FY27 funding requests, we strongly and respectfully urge the Subcommittee to prioritize Head Start. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

---

Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress