



May 14, 2019

Re: Early Childhood Funding and Head Start & Early Head Start Programs

Dear Governor Newsom and Budget Leaders of the California State Legislature:

Head Start California is the nonprofit association supporting more than 150 grantees operating over 2,000 sites and serving more than 100,000 infants, children and families. We thank you for your commitment to early childhood programs for California's children and families. On behalf of the organizations signed on to this letter, we are writing to respectfully request funding for California's Head Start and Early Head Start programs to invest in their capacity to serve more of our state's most vulnerable infants, toddlers, preschool age children and their families.

California Head Start and Early Head Start grantees currently bring in \$1 billion in federal funds to the state and serve approximately 100,000 children from birth to age five and their families. These programs are multi-generational poverty intervention — providing nutrition, health, dental and social services — as well as quality care and education programs designed to meet local priorities.

To maximize federal funding and leverage capacity of Head Start and Early Head Start to serve more infants and toddlers and their families as part of California's system of early care and education, Head Start California and its partners support an investment of state funds of \$20 million.

Head Start and Early Head Start programs must provide a 20% match in local or state funding or in-kind contributions. These programs face additional fiscal challenges that jeopardize their capacity to continue to serve families and communities. When agencies cannot find or retain qualified staff, struggle to provide facilities to serve infants and toddlers, or cannot enroll enough eligible families, the number of funded slots is reduced.

Our proposal is for a state budget appropriation of \$20 million in 2019-20 to be allocated to Head Start and Early Head Start grantees, including American Indian/Alaskan Native and Migrant & Seasonal program grantees, based on the total funded enrollment of each grant.

Funds would count towards the 20% match requirement. Uses of the funds would be determined by local priorities to focus on the following:

- Strengthening staff recruitment, retention, and professional development to support the education requirements of Head Start and Early Head Start.
- Expanding outreach to automatically eligible children including those experiencing homelessness, foster care, or those on public assistance (e.g. TANF).
- Renovating or converting facilities to serve infants and toddlers up to 36 months.

This proposal is consistent with the Governor's May budget proposal for facilities and workforce development for California's child care system and with the draft recommendations Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Care and Education to provide state support for Head Start. It also reflects the Women's Legislative Caucus proposal to continue to improve access to child care programs so that capacity can meet the needs of parents and children.

Therefore, as a coalition, we ask you to support Head Start California's budget request for \$20M in our 2019-20 state budget.

Thank you for your consideration. For more information, please contact me at 916.444.7760 x 105 or chris@headstartca.org.

Sincerely,



Christopher Maricle
Executive Director
Head Start California